

►The 2021 IAFE Virtual Vision is a success, featured more than 30 workshops — page 36

Amusement TODAY

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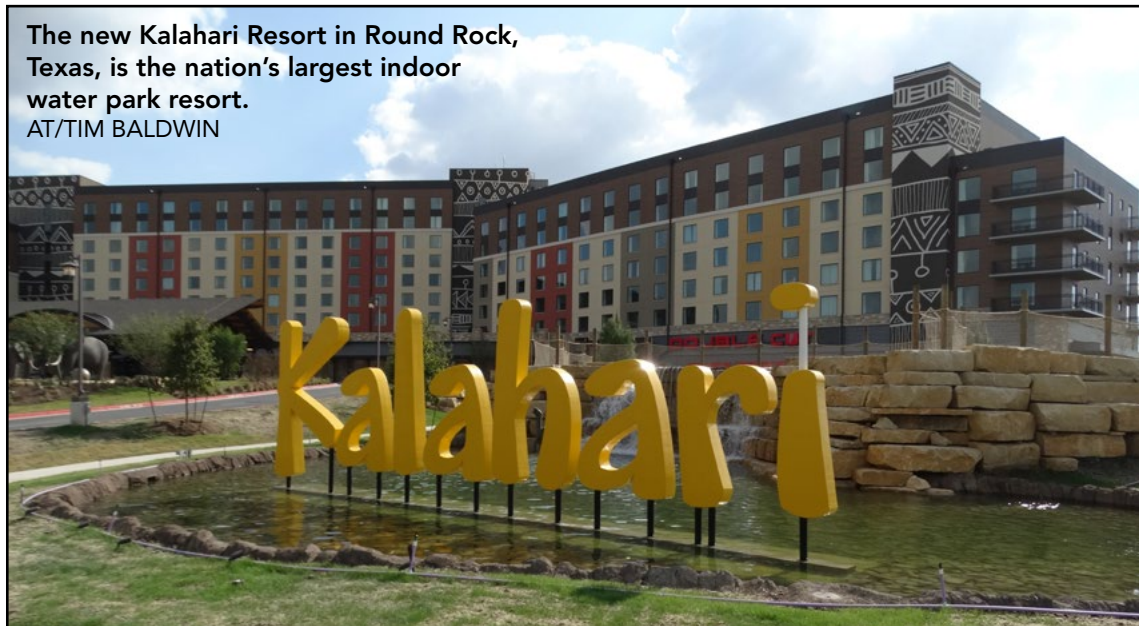
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Indiana Beach works
to save coaster
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January 2021 | Vol. 24 • Issue 10

Digital Edition

The new Kalahari Resort in Round Rock, Texas, is the nation's largest indoor water park resort.
AT/TIM BALDWIN



Fourth location for African-themed chain

Texas debuts nation's largest indoor water park resort with Kalahari

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ROUND ROCK, Texas — The adage "Everything's bigger in Texas" is thrown about much too often. But in Round Rock, they mean it! Just 20 miles north of the state capitol, Austin, and home to **Dell Inc.**, the city has a population of around 130,000. Acknowledged as a livable, safe city, Round Rock has a new resident: **Kalahari**.

"I love Texas," General Manager **Tim Arnold** told *Amusement Today*. "This particular Kalahari is in more of a metropolitan area. Being placed where we are, we're between some of the country's largest cities. Most of our other resorts are in remote locations. This one is where we will pull in a lot of local business from local towns."

The indoor water park resort chain opened its fourth

location on November 12. Along with it came a slew of bragging rights, starting with America's largest. Total square footage of the resort is 1.5 million with the water park itself boasting 223,000 square feet. With a global health crisis still lingering, the ability to have space to spread out is a plus. There are 975 rooms, among them one-, two- and three-bedroom suites.

Kalahari is more than just a water park, and it also caters to everyone. The beautiful 200,000-square-foot convention center boasts two ballrooms (40,000 and 22,000 square feet). Further event space includes 50,000 square feet of outdoor opportunities with covered terraces, an event barn and grand lawn.

Other activities include a 12-lane **Brunswick** bowling alley, a 250-game arcade, an arts-and-crafts **Adventurers Club** and indoor amuse-

ment park that features rides, a mirror maze (**Family Entertainment Group**), laser tag (**Zone Laser Tag**), a ropes course and climbing walls (**RCI**) and 10,000 square feet of retail space. Adults seeking pampering will find the **Spa Kalahari** and **Salon**. Keeping with Austin's "cool music" vibe, **Amatuli Marketplace** fuses real artisans showing their handmade wares along with a live music stage. A central fire pit makes for an inviting area, even for the locals.

The resort was designed by **HKS Architects** out of Dallas and built by **Hensel Phelps Construction** (based in Austin).

Founder **Todd Nelson** got his start in Wisconsin Dells, a hub of indoor and outdoor water parks. A family trip to Africa more than 20 years ago inspired the theme to the first

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2021 kicks off with AIMS Virtual Safety Seminar

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — "We have been going gangbusters," said **Mary Jane Brewer**, executive director, **AIMS International**, in the first week of December describing how the association was faring with completing the scheduling of courses for the **2021 AIMS Virtual Safety Seminar**, set for Jan. 11-29.

"We are doing fantastic," she said. "Our goal was to have 120 hours of course content. We are right now at 131 hours."

The AIMS Board of Directors made the decision last August to hold the 2021 seminar virtually. The event was to run Jan. 11-15 in Galveston, Texas. By October, AIMS had hired an outside virtual event production company, **O'Design**, and two first-time features had been added. Those included **Ellis and Associates** delivering the seminar's aquatics curriculum and 20 hours of inspection and maintenance education delivered entirely in Spanish by **Loyola Hugo**, **Fantasilandia** Santiago, Chile.

The Spanish track created the fifth track for the seminar, along with maintenance, operation, inspection, and aquatics. But now there are six tracks, said Brewer.

"We added a specialty track," she said. "I don't know if we will fill that track completely out but we are excited about the new coursework."

There will be four courses presented per hour with approximately 20 hours offered in each track except for the specialty.

The live portion of the safety seminar will be held Jan. 11-15, but participants will have an additional two weeks of access to the content. This means they will be able to spread the hours out over an additional two weeks.

"Many of our participants aren't used to sitting in front a computer for hours and hours every day," Brewer said. "They are more hands-on so we felt this would work out much better."

Brewer said they are very happy to have **Harold Hudson**, president and CEO **AAPRA Associates**, deliver the keynote address during the seminar on January 11 beginning at 12 noon.

"Harold is an icon in the amusement industry and a driving force behind many of today's industry wide safety standards," Brewer said. "We are thrilled to have him delivering this year's keynote address."

Prior to joining AAPRA, Hudson spent more than 21 years with **Six Flags Theme Parks** as the senior vice president of engineering and development. He has extensive knowledge in ride and attractions development, theme park development and park operations, capital planning, and the evaluation of ride systems and manufacturers.

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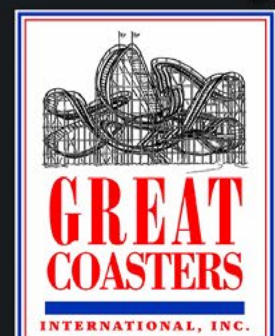
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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

AT NOTEBOOK: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Dippin' Dots technology used in vaccine shipping



Slade

The COVID-19 virus has hit the world hard and hit our amusement industry even harder with parks and other facilities either limited on their operating schedule or not open at all.

When President Donald Trump signed the order for Operation Warp Speed, he created a speedy pathway for the development of the coronavirus vaccine.

With the approval of the Pfizer and BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine ready for distribution in mid-December, one big shipping problem had to be solved.

The vaccine must be stored at -94 degrees Fahrenheit or the important components can degrade. Another vaccine, made by Moderna, is also soon to be distributed with a shipping requirement of -4 degrees Fahrenheit.

To keep the millions of vaccines secure during transport, manufacturers created a "cold chain" infrastructure that standardizes the temperature throughout every step of the shipping process.

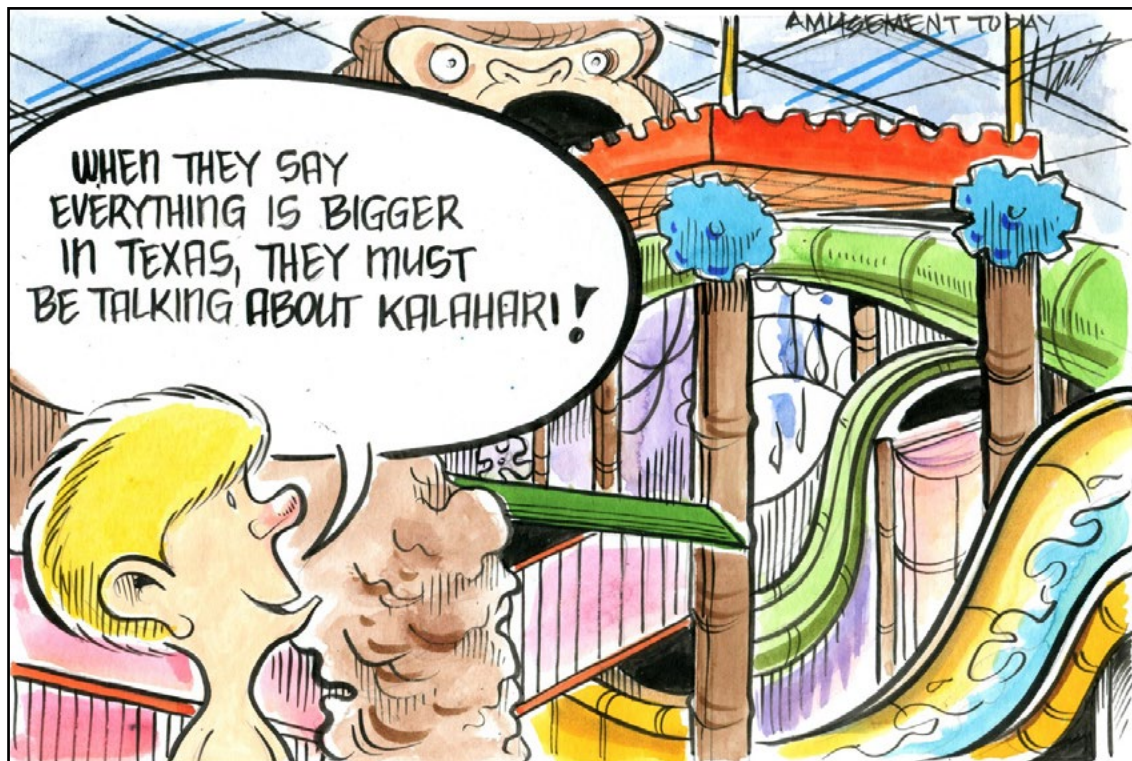
That process was originally perfected in 1988 when a microbiologist invented Dippin' Dots. Dippin' Dots ice cream maintains its small bead characteristic form by its storage temperature of -49 degrees Fahrenheit. With the ice cream invention also came the use of special containers lined with dry ice that makes the shipment of the popular "Ice Cream of the Future" possible.

The cold chain infrastructure tracks each vaccine shipment and when/if the dry ice may need to be replenished during transit.

Pfizer is using packaging it calls "pizza trays," each of which can be loaded with 195 vials of frozen vaccine. This design keeps the product insulated from the elements until it reaches its destination. Upon arrival, the trays must be properly moved to storage using more dry ice or into ultra-low freezers.

While the success of the vaccine is yet to be seen, the success of its cold delivery to the public can be traced back to a popular ice cream with park guests: Dippin' Dots.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: Mark Rosenzweig, Senior Account Executive, 3dx Scenic

Reflecting before a new year

The year 2020 taught our industry an awful lot on both a collective and individual level. We each have our personal stories to reflect upon but as an industry we have our collective perseverance to celebrate.

An industry that prides itself on customer service and safety was handed the most unpredictable wild card and the result of our combined efforts was nothing short of spectacular. When the focus on safety is engrained in our muscle memory, any new challenge — even a pandemic — can be overcome. The common question that was asked in March was "How can a business model that relies on the physical gathering of guests be successful?"

This was answered with parks and attractions all around the world working together and collaborating on reopening plans that addressed ride sanitizing, rerouted queues to allow for physical distancing, modified ride unit boarding procedures, and even the addition of plexiglass partitions both in queues and on select ride units to allow for maximum hourly capacity all while taking into account the health and safety of our guests and operations teams. It has been said (rightfully so) many times



Rosenzweig

how indescribably difficult 2020 was both for individuals and businesses, but it is also so important that we celebrate our success stories from the most challenging year our industry has faced in any of our lifetimes.

In 2020, my career journey took an unplanned trek about 500 miles west of Baltimore, Maryland (where I had served under multiple titles with Ride Entertainment since 2007) to the Cincinnati, Ohio, area. Once there, I joined the team at 3dx Scenic. Having been on the amusement ride side of things for over 20 years, the shift to scenic fabrication has been a welcome career refresh, allowing me to learn and absorb knowledge of an entirely new sector of the industry. While I miss the fresh seafood from the Chesapeake, having Skyline Chili at my doorstep is something only my waistline is regretting.

I'm eager to see what 2021 and beyond brings to all of us. With the combination of our industry's history of perseverance with the rapid distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, the future will be bright — not only for our industry, but also for each of us on a personal level. Let's raise a glass to 2021 and slam the door on the challenge that was 2020.

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columnist(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.



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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Wes Ramey, Dollywood

Wes Ramey grew up visiting the Smoky Mountains with his parents and grandparents, and **Dollywood** was always on their list of favorite places to see. Today, he is the public relations director for this ultra-popular Tennessee theme park. Wes loves anything with an engine and wheels and prior to his role at Dollywood, worked for the **Bristol Motor Speedway**. He also did a stint as an adjunct professor at **East Tennessee State University**, where he received his master's degree. More than anything, Wes enjoys time with his wife and two young children.

Title: Public Relations Director.

Number of years in the industry: 8.

Best thing about the industry: We give our guests a place where they can escape the pressures of the world and spend time together making memories they'll keep forever.

Favorite amusement ride: Flying Scooters. Once we installed the Mad Mockingbird last season, I was hooked. There is nothing like controlling your own experience!

If I weren't working in the amusement industry, I would ... Still be working in my previous industry, motorsports.

Biggest challenge facing our industry: As of now, the biggest challenge facing our industry — and the world — is the coronavirus pandemic and how we must continue to innovate and change every single day to adapt.

The thing I like most about amusement park season is ... The excitement when everything is operational, guests are having fun, and it's sunny and 75!

On New Year's Eve, I usually ... Stay home with my wife and our two young kids (5 and 3). They never make it to midnight, but they try as hard as they can.

When you have out-of-town guests, where is your favorite place to take them? This one is pretty obvious but... definitely Dollywood. I've been coming to the park since I was two, so I'm a little partial to it.

What's your typical breakfast? I've never been a regular breakfast eater. However, on the occasion I do eat breakfast, it is typically biscuits and gravy. You can't go wrong with that!

What's one thing you do on Friday to jumpstart the weekend? Because the weekend can be so hectic, we try to make sure we spend time together on Friday night as a family. We may go out to eat (not so much right now), watch a movie at home, or play outside, but we make an intentional effort to be together.

It's a sunny Sunday afternoon ... where would we typically find you? After we get home from church, we're usually playing in the yard or catching up on chores.



Dollywood's **Wes Ramey** is known for his love of anything with an engine and wheels. COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

When I say, 2021, what comes to your mind? Let's hope we get back to "normal."

Who's in charge of dinnertime in your house? We share the responsibility. We bought a Blackstone griddle and you can usually find me on the deck griddling some new recipe.

If money were no object, I would ... Own a Chevrolet Camaro ZL1.

The coolest thing on my desk right now is ... A personalized Louisville Slugger from our Chicago Cubs affiliate, the Tennessee Smokies. We sponsored some of their games one summer and they asked several of us to come throw out the first pitch. It was the week before Father's Day and I knew I would embarrass myself, so we found a father and his young son to throw in my place!

The busiest day of the week for me always seems to be ... Monday. You're catching up from the weekend, trying to prepare for the week ahead, and you're in several meetings to make sure everyone is updated on the best plans for moving forward.

The one place I would rather be more than anywhere is ... With my family. I really don't care where we are as long as we are together.

Worst outdoor chore? Pulling weeds.

The TV show I never miss is ... I have two young kids, so I find that I don't get to make that decision anymore. What I typically see now is something on Disney+ ... *Chuggington*, *Doc McStuffins*, *Cars* or anything with a princess.

If I could spend a day with anyone in the world, it would be ... Dolly. While we do spend a lot of time with her when she is at the park, I would enjoy being able to spend time with her away from the park to hear more of her stories, humor and take on life. There really is no one like Dolly Parton.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

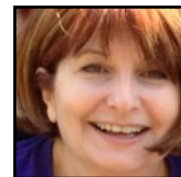
Voice of the 'Belle'



BRANSON, Mo. — Fans of NBC's *The Voice* may have recognized singer Kelsie Watts on this past season as part of Kelly Clarkson's team. Attendees at the 2018 Golden Ticket Awards (hosted by Silver Dollar City) got to hear the singer's phenomenal voice aboard the Branson Belle. The television show has given the Lubbock-native performer even more recognition and love.

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

Reflections ON FUN



AT: Lottie Minick

A tale of trade shows past

Gina Guglielmi — president, **Intermark Ride Group** which represents **Moser Rides** — shares a tale of an IAAPA Expo after hours event at the Royal Sonesta Hotel Suite, New Orleans.

Alfeo Moser of **Moser Rides** passed this summer. He was a true gentleman and professional. Those of us who knew him continue to miss him.

One evening back in the 80s, Moser and **Mel Eddy** of **Zierer**, joined **Karen Oertley**, **Hedy Weisbart** and myself who were all with *Amusement Business* at the time.

While sitting on a balcony overlooking Bourbon Street, imbibing cocktails, our conversation turned to hangovers. Moser, being Italian, was not familiar with this term. The rest of us acted out the charades of a hangover. Moser exclaimed "postumi della sbornia" which translated to "the aftermath of drunkenness." He then announced, "We need Fernet Branca!"

We tell him we don't need any more alcohol, but he proclaims, "It's like medicine for you, you will have no hangover." We proceed to do shots of the ugly, dark brown liquor with spiced aroma.

Across the street in the second floor apartment, the curtains opened and we saw a young couple very close to each other becoming intimate. In fun, we cheered the couple. The boy bowed, closing the curtain. Before sunrise, we headed to our hotels, holding up the buildings. The IAAPA Expo opened at 9:00 a.m. on the dot and we were there looking sharp. The Fernet Branca worked and everyone enjoyed another successful show.

Lottie Minick is a 46-year attractions industry veteran and co-owner of Dallas-based Minick Associates, a design firm founded by her late husband, Bob. Her monthly column features behind-the-scenes anecdotes of her own and from those who have worked in the business. Got a fun industry story? Email lottie@minickassociates.com.

►AIMS

Continued from page 1

Hudson was a founding member of the ASTM F24 Standards Committee and serves on several industry standards and safety commissions and panels where his knowledge of technical safety issues often leads to industry change.



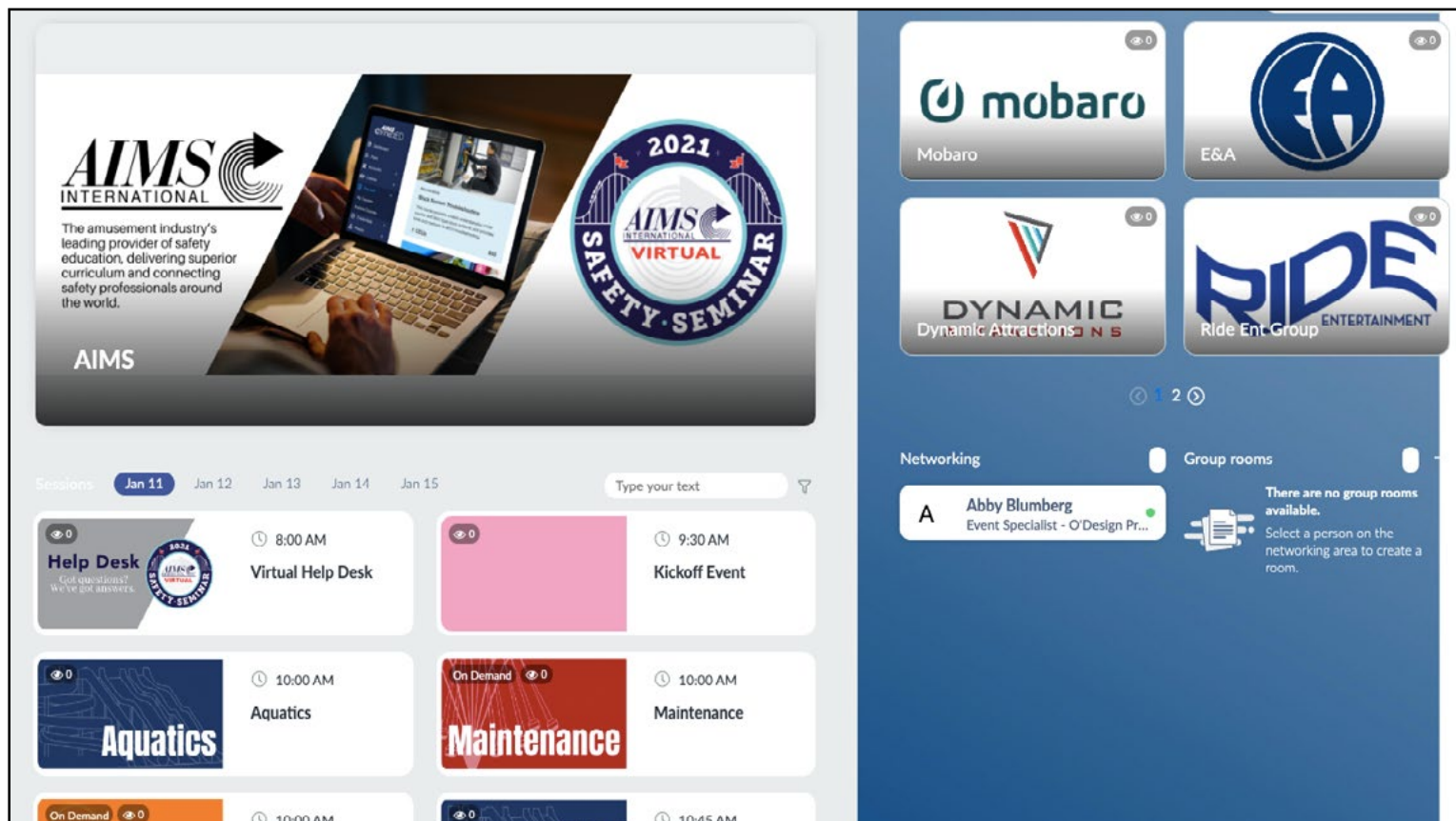
Hudson

The AIMS board awards will be announced right after Hudson's address.

Sessions will be delivered in a simu-live format with instructors prerecording their classes then being on-hand afterward for live questions and answers.

Jason Freeman, Six Flags Entertainment Corp., a presenter last year, will participate in the COVID-19 Lessons Learned panel this year.

"The AIMS safety seminar maintenance and operations training is very important," Freeman said. "It is important to our company, our industry and to our nation. We are committed to AIMS. Our parks will send, virtually, attendees like we have always done."



This "Virtual Session" screen is what the classroom will look like during the 2021 AIMS Virtual Safety Seminar set to run Jan. 11-29. AIMS decided to take the annual event virtual due to the continuing challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. COURTESY AIMS INTERNATIONAL

New safety scholarship honors Jake Kaminsky

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — **AIMS International** has partnered with the family of **Jake Kaminsky** to create the Jake Kaminsky Memorial Scholarship Award. The scholarship is named after Jake Kaminsky, an AIMS Certified Maintenance Technician Level II and 2020 **AIMS International Safety Seminar** attendee.

In announcing the scholarship, his family wanted the industry to know that Kaminsky was passionate, hardworking and self-motivated. The family passed along that he knew every detail about roller coasters and was eager to share his knowledge with anyone who would listen.

Kaminsky started in the industry at 15 years old as a ride operator at **Six Flags Great America**, Gurnee, Illinois. He transitioned to the maintenance department where he learned about the technical aspects of coasters only furthering his passion for learning everything he could about coasters.

After Six Flags, he worked at **SeaWorld** and ultimately **RMC** where he accomplished his dream of building a roller coaster.

AIMS International is able to offer scholarships to its annual safety seminars for those students who may not have the financial means to attend on their own.

Kaminsky's family worked with AIMS to determine that the recipient of the Jake Kaminsky Memorial Scholarship have experience as a ride operator with enthusiasm for roller coasters and an interest in advancing his/her career in the amusement industry.

This scholarship was added to other 2021 AIMS safety seminar scholarships including the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions Alan Ramsey** Scholarship. There also is an AIMS International scholarship.

•aimsintl.org

Freeman feels there have been many lessons learned from the 2020 pandemic.

"I think we have learned a lot as a company, an industry and as a nation," Freeman said. "I think there is a lot of information to discuss on

how to maintain whether we opened or not in 2020."

Brewer said an online exam for Level I will be offered after the conclusion of the seminar.

"We found a virtual platform so we can do a proctored exam," Brewer said. "Our by-laws say we have to do the exams live and they have to be proctored."

Those taking the virtual exam will be given instructions.

Regional live testing also will take in 2021, but there has been no schedule set as yet.

"Once things open up again, we will set it up," she said. "We are thinking maybe doing them in Florida, Southern California, Dallas, but we can't schedule anything because we don't know anything. But we are working on the solutions."

AIMS safety seminar will continue with its tradition of offering coursework by industry professionals volunteering their time just like every other year. And just like every year, attendees will build their own schedule to best suit their needs and desired outcome. Actionable safety information is carried home to share with colleagues and co-workers.

The live networking built into the virtual seminar platform will connect and/or reconnect industry professionals.

AIMS leadership realizes that the virtual platform can not take the place of the in-

person seminars, but by the support being received by the industry, there will still be a lot of information available in the virtual event.

"One good thing about the virtual event is that the courses won't fill," Brewer said. "There will be no cut-off on the number of attendees signed up for one course."

A sampling of courses under the maintenance track include Fluid Power Basic and Fluid Power Advanced, Maintenance Checklist, Electrical Basic, Electrical Troubleshooting, Basic FG Maintenance Assessment and Repair and Block System Troubleshooting.

A sampling of topics in operations include Human Engineering, Crisis Communication, COVID topics, Developing A Seasonal Supervisor Training Program, Common Staffing Errors, Human Engineering Weather, Training and Development, Relating to our Guests Ride Operations, Operations Supervisory Basics, Documentation and How To Reward Your Team.

In aquatics, topics will include Waterslide Inspection, Aquatic Facilities and Safety, Aquatic Preopening Inspections, Emergency Response Advanced Water Quality, Safe Clean Waterpark Operation, Emergency Action Plan, Five Keys to Elevate Your Operation, Virginia Graeme Baker Safety Act, Safe Clean Waterpark Operation, Emergency

Action Plan and Artificial Lagoons - Model Health Code.

A sampling of inspection topics include Visual Inspection, Roller Coaster Wheel Safety and Inspection, Common Inspection Points Implementing Rope Access, Drones and Submersibles Blocking, Corrosion, ASTM F770 - Inspections and Maintenance, Fasteners, Inspections Beyond the Metal, Foundations, Safety Restraints, Bearing Maintenance and Inspection and Midway Inspection.

Some of the topics under the safety track include ASTM - Kat and Tony Combined, Developing a Culture of Safety, Traveling Show Security, Special Event Security ASTM F24 Current Standards, Emergency Response Planning - The Six Step Process, Carnival Emergency Planning, Guest Mindset, ASTM F24 Intro Update to the Standards 2021, PPE, How to Protect Your Organization from Lawsuits, Emergency Response Training - Are Your Employees Really Prepared? and Safety at Testing and Commissioning.

The Spanish track will offer 20 hours of inspection and maintenance education delivered entirely in Spanish.

The specialty track will include such topics as Cable Ski, Legal Roundtable, Inspects and Audits Defining Your Project Requirements and Ride Upgrade/Revamping.

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Best wishes for a happy and safe 2021 from AIMS International!

As a non-profit organization, **AIMS International** is dedicated to improving safety in the amusement industry through leadership in education. Despite the global pandemic, our volunteer instructors have enabled us to deliver the industry's leading safety seminar that everyone has come to expect from AIMS International. More than 70 industry professionals will share their expertise in more than 140 class hours on our virtual platform when the 2021 AIMS International Virtual Safety Seminar kicks off on January 11. This commitment to safety education in the amusement industry is priceless. We cannot begin to thank our instructors enough for the hours spent preparing and recording their presentations to deliver the most up-to-date information on safety issues and standards today.

We are also grateful to those who volunteer their time and expertise in assembling this outstanding group of instructors and shape our seminar

curriculum — the AIMS Curriculum Committee. Led by AIMS board member, **Richard Achard**, the 2021 Safety Seminar Curriculum Committee includes: **Harold Hudson; David Bromilow; Gina Claassen, Franeen Gonzales, Jeff Abendshien, Tony Claassen, Darlene Reese-Sittig** and **Holly Coston**.

Because we shifted to a brand-new format for the 2021 AIMS International Safety Seminar, we enlisted the help of several AIMS board members and industry heavy-hitters to help select and design the virtual conferencing platform that will be used to deliver the educational sessions this year. Thank you to **Andreas Tanzer, David Bromilow, Tony Claassen, Rick Achard** and **Eric Fluet** for their tireless work on perfecting the virtual platform. A big thank you to **Hugo Loyola** for coordinating the brand-new Spanish-language track and for recording so many presentations himself. Many

thanks also to **Joe Stefanyak** and the whole team from **Ellis & Associates**, our new partner in education, who coordinated and will deliver outstanding programming for the Aquatics Track. And last, but certainly not least, our heartfelt appreciation goes out to our wonderful student volunteer-moderator coordinator, **Samantha Bercik**, who is a full-time mechanical engineering student at **Georgia Tech** and is preparing to graduate in 2021.

Thank you to our 2021 Virtual Safety Seminar Sponsors!

On behalf of the AIMS board of directors and the entire amusement industry, we are especially grateful for those companies who support the work and mission of AIMS International as sponsors of the Safety Seminar. At the present time, our 2021 AIMS Safety Seminar sponsors include:

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There's still time to register for the 2021 AIMS International Virtual Safety Seminar, which starts on January 11. Please visit aimsintl.org/aims-international-safety-seminar to register today!

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►KALAHARI

Continued from page 1

Kalahari resort. As the Texas facility is the chain's fourth, the Nelson family continues to seek out ways to improve.

Natasha Nelson Lucke, one of Todd Nelson's five children and co-owner, told *Amusement Today* at the resort's opening, "We've improved our walk length by doing a spoked hotel, instead of the long runs at the other properties."

The most captivating aspect of a visitor's first impression is the art. Like the previous three facilities, it's all authentic. Kalahari invested \$600,000 in art alone. To date, Kalahari Resorts has invested more than \$5.5 million in the purchase of African art, textiles and more to support African communities.

"We ordered 10 forty-foot containers this time around. We went to Africa about a year-and-a-half ago: Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya," said Lucke. The diversity of the pieces ranges from small to giant, wall hangings to paintings to sculptures. "We unloaded incredible artwork."

The primary lure to entice vacationers is the water park. With an array of colorful slides jutting from the resort's walls, excitement begins for families as they drive on property. The primary supplier is **ProSlide Technology**.

"With each Kalahari Resort that ProSlide is a part of, the ride and attraction mix has continued to evolve and grow, including both new, innovative attractions and features, alongside proven guest favorites. Kalahari Round Rock shares many of those favorite attractions with other Kalahari resorts like the high-performance WaterKingdom RideHouse aquatic play center for families," said ProSlide's



Rides 4 U's Len Soled poses with Todd Nelson, founder of the Kalahari brand, during the San Antonio resort's grand opening (above). The facility is filled with numerous food and beverage offerings, all carried out in high style (right).

AT/GARY SLADE

Senior Vice-President of Global Strategic Partnerships, **Jeff Janovich**.

In this property's design, one of the goals was to open up more space inside. Even with an impressive array of 30 water slides, 20 pools and outdoor attractions, the fun to be had spans three acres. A 21-and-older, swim-up bar caters to adults in a themed grotto.

"Every indoor waterpark tries to strike the right balance of indoor attractions and play features to create energy, excitement and anticipation for guests, while maximizing the valuable indoor space for pools, rivers, cabanas and lounging areas," said Janovich. "ProSlide works with the owners and the aquatic designers to select the individual ride attractions for the resort. Together we then work on progressively more detailed concept layouts of the water park element and specific ride placement to meet the capacity and demographic needs of the park, while also respecting the overall budget for the project. Many of the most popular ride attractions have elements and features that are very large and not practical to locate indoors. We've come up with innova-

tive ways of saving space by starting the ride indoors, continuing the ride path outdoors — where the larger features are located — and then returning the rider indoors, all in one seamless experience. By locating these elements outdoors, the indoor volume of the water park can be a manageable size and the outdoor features become colorful billboards to attract guests driving past the resort."

"The water park is our driving force. People are amazed at the size of the indoor water park in Texas," said Arnold.

The wave pool sports a gigantic ZeroVision display screen. For much of the day it provides popular music with musical artists being shown via video.

"That screen can come into play for many different uses. We can tailor it to the season, and our guests will see themselves on the screen from time to time," Arnold said. "We can use it for birthday parties and close-up encounters."

A FlowRider supplied by **Aquatic Development Group** is a staple with the Kalahari chain.

"Kalahari Resorts has chosen the FlowRider time and



time again because of its ability to hit the key teen demographic and continue to be a profit-center for their resorts," said **Ray Lauenstein**, business development manager, ADG. "There is no other attraction that can accomplish as much as the FlowRider can, in regard to progressive skill-based experience, spectator appeal, and food & beverage revenue generation — in such a small footprint. Kalahari Resorts was one of the very first indoor water park facilities to have a FlowRider at their property in Wisconsin Dells back in 2004. And since then, they have included a FlowRider in each and every one of their resorts — adding not one but two in their Sandusky, Ohio, location."

Among the attractions are themed areas aimed for the little ones.

"Weber themes our children's areas. We dedicate these areas to certain age groups, so they can graduate up each time they come," stated Lucke. "Eventually they get to the big thrill rides in the park."

The resort also features outdoor pools, slides and activities that will be available from spring through October

owing to the southern climate.

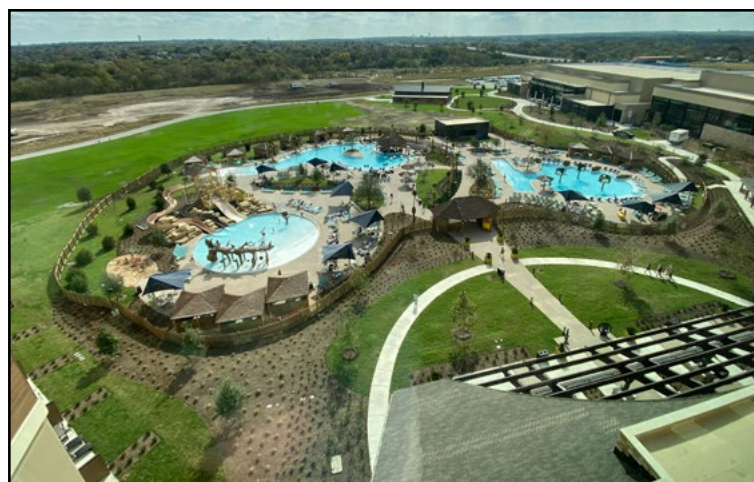
Design and construction of the water park was done by **Neuman Pools and Water Technologies, Inc.**

Another signature element of the resort is Tom Foolerys, an indoor amusement park. Upon entrance, one of the flashiest rides is Zamperla's newest product, the NebulaZ. Called Red, White & Whoo at Kalahari, the spectacular ride is the first to appear in the U.S. outside the **Luna Park** Zamperla playground.

"The newest of our Tweener Rides, it truly captures what it means to be broad-appeal," said **Michael Coleman**, North American sales manager, Zamperla. "The NebulaZ is a thrilling machine that captures the imagination of guests as small as 42 inches without being terrifying and has an impact great enough to impress the ever-hard-to-please teenage park-goer."

"Nebulaz has been a great success for us. After the IAAPA Brass Ring Award won at IAAPA Expo 2019, the Nebulaz in **Walibi Rhône-Alpes**, France, has won the Europe's Best New Rides

► See KALAHARI, page 10



With its southern climate, the Texas facility will be able to use its outdoor activities several months out of the year. Large portions of the water park attractions from ProSlide are built outside two walls to give the interior a more open feeling (middle). Rides 4 U supplied numerous rides in the indoor amusement park, including the Big Air Coaster that Kalahari named Screamin' Centipede (right). AT/GARY SLADE, TIM BALDWIN



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Talking with Kalahari co-owners Travis Nelson and Natasha Nelson Lucke



Travis Nelson



Natasha Nelson Lucke

Why Texas, and more specifically, why Round Rock?

Natasha: We were looking at Texas for many years now, even before we were looking at our Pennsylvania property. It was inevitable to get here. We looked at Dallas and Frisco and felt it was too "business centric" and concrete jungle-esque. We found Round Rock and felt it was wonderful. It's close to the capital and close to San Antonio. It's centrally located, so driving is easy.

What have you learned from the previous Kalahari facilities that made this one more efficient?

Travis: One of the things that has made us incredibly successful is literally not having an ego about anything. We can always do it better. We'll take any area of the resort and see how we can improve on it. I think we have improved in almost every aspect. The lobby is much more beautiful. We got the latest and greatest attractions in the indoor theme park and the water park. Step by step, what can we improve?

Natasha: We've improved our food and beverage greatly. We have five full-service restaurants along with the other eateries. We have the outdoor Amatuli Market where we have artisans from Austin and Texas — and hopefully Africa — to where people can come in and watch them make art and listen to live music.

The resort artwork is authentic as it comes from Africa. Do you have a favorite piece?

Travis: I'll actually say I have a hundred favorite pieces. During the quarantine, we had this great friend who owns this company in Africa. The artists in Tanzania are so skilled, but there's just no work. No one was buying art; there was no tourism. They were literally starving. We had this idea. Commission a hundred artists to do [artwork] at \$100 a piece — which feeds a family for months in Tanzania — and they would deliver them for the opening, sight unseen. Natasha came up with the theme, the category of love, and that's all we told them. We unwrapped them and looked at these incredibly beautiful pieces, very intricate, and will display them. Hopefully in time we can auction them and get that money back to Africa.

Why the decision to add rides to a water park resort?

Travis: You can't just swim all day. You can't stay here three days and just live in the water park. You've got to dry them off. It makes perfect sense for Tom Foolerys to have something for everyone as well. We have the teacups as well as this new intricate Zamperla (NebulaZ) ride. IAAPA [Expo] is such an important part of the process. We almost didn't buy that [Zamperla] ride — we were leaving — and I looked at my dad and said, "We've got to have it." We rode it again and we bought it.

How did you decide what to put into the water park?

Travis: We sat down with ProSlide and said, "We want the best." We got the biggest Tornado and the Tornado Alley, two pro bowls and the saucers... The day before we opened, the whole Nelson family — three generations, we had 23 people — we all just played.

Talk about the community enjoying the resort.

Travis: You can buy day passes to the water park or Tom Foolerys. We have five full-service restaurants that cater to outside guests. We have a bar and live music stage and fire. We did our first Tex-Mex, Cinco Niños. You got to have Tex-Mex here. My father named it after his five kids. It was a complete package.



Red, White and Whoo (left) is one of the first Zamperla Nebulaz rides to appear in the U.S. Visitors can catch a wave on the FlowRider from ADG (right). AT/GARY SLADE, TIM BALDWIN



►KALAHARI

Continued from page 6

2020 given by the European Star Award," said Nicholas Trentin, global marketing director, Zamperla.

"The unique ride experience of the never-before-seen movement in a small footprint provides a dual experience of forward and reverse airtime in a flashy package for all," added Coleman.

Other rides in the mix were provided by Rides 4 U.

"This is exciting for me. We worked on the right mix for a couple years," said Len Soled, owner, Rides 4-U. "They waited long enough to get the coaster of their dreams, which was the Big Air Coaster we displayed at IAAPA [Expo] last year. They rode it and loved it. Todd and his family all took a test ride and gave it their blessing. That's, I think, the highlight of the rides. Roller coasters are always popular."

Rides 4 U supplied multiple SBF-Visa rides which include the new pneumatic Drop 'n' Twist, a small micro coaster, a teacup and mini jet, several themed by the park.

The Round Rock resort represents an investment of \$550 million. With a project this massive, the surprise arrival of a global pandemic was not ideal.

"We picked this date three years ago and we are so fortunate to be opening today," Lucke told AT at the grand opening. "COVID didn't slow us down. We're following all state mandates. We have eliminated high touch areas. We have a wellness concierge, a new department for us. These are people who are trained specifically in COVID response to help keep people calm and safe. They walk around throughout the resort to help out."

Following several weeks of



A large RCI ropes course lets kids of all ages work off energy. AT/GARY SLADE

operation, Arnold concurred. "We're a family company. We're serious about keeping families safe," he said. "It's added a new dimension to what we do, but it hasn't slowed down our enthusiasm and passion."

Kalahari Round Rock seems to have captured the spirit of Texas within its African theme. Because of the variety of offerings, locals can come out for dinner, live music or purchase a day pass to one of the parks, even if they don't require an overnight stay.

"My favorite restaurant is Cinco Niños," Arnold said of the chain's first foray into Mexican cuisine. "It's named after Mr. Nelson's five kids. It's Texas. You've got to have Mexican. And you're going to love our pizza at Sortino's. It's the top of the top."

Cinco Niños menu is far beyond the typical Tex-Mex fare with outstanding signature dishes.

"All of our food is made from scratch. We don't buy and resell [product]. Our food is made by chefs. That's a major difference between us and other resorts," Arnold added.

"This resort caters to everyone," said Travis Nelson, co-owner and one of the five

Nelson children. "We cater to adults. If you don't have kids, you're going to have a great time. Lots of live music, 21-and-older spaces, beautiful pools indoors and outdoors, the swim-up grotto bar — it really is as much an adult destination as it is a family destination."

"One of the big surprises has been Redd's Piano Bar," said Arnold. "We have that here that we don't have at any other resort. It has live piano music nightly and really has a sense of hominess and kind of a contemporary urban feel that you would see in New York. It already has seen a lot of locals becoming regulars."

"Music is so important here being so close to Austin. You'll see that spread around the resort," added Lucke.

"I've opened 15 or 16 resorts around the country. I've never come across a city council that have been so enthusiastic since day one," said Arnold. "The local community is so supportive. And we've been able to give back. That's important to us. We want to be a part of the community."

Approximately 1,000 employees have been hired to date.

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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Knoebels Amusement Resort looking ahead — page 18 / Fairs turn to holiday lighting displays — page 24

Oklahoma City's Riversport venue expands, adds indoor skiing

AT: Tim Baldwin

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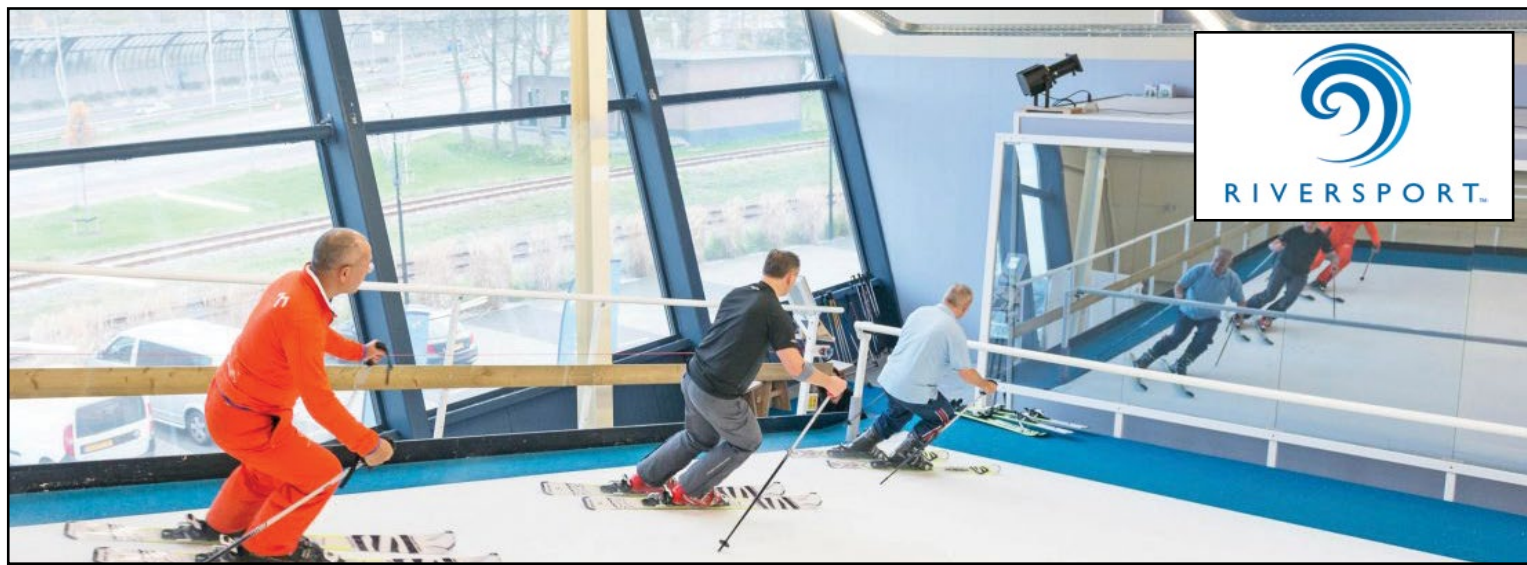
OKLAHOMA CITY — What started in 2005 as a simple endeavor with a floating dock, a small fleet of rowing vessels and the beginnings of a boathouse has evolved dramatically in the years since. The state's capitol city has rejuvenated its downtown with high end sports facilities, new skyscrapers, Brick Town tourist area and the Boathouse District.

What has grown into the **Riversport OKC** complex now includes rowing, whitewater rafting, **RCI** ropes courses, biking, dragon boating, **Wiegand** sky slides, ziplines and more adjacent to the Oklahoma River. Its most recent addition was surfing — the only **ADG FlowRider** in the state. It's a multipurpose recreation area that not only caters to families and local residents but serves as a training facility for the USA Olympic rowing team.

Up next? Indoor snow skiing. Funded by a grant from **Inasmuch Foundation**, the recreation facility will debut **Ski OKC** in the spring of 2021.

"Inasmuch Foundation is a proud supporter of **Riversport Foundation's** efforts to provide numerous activities for our entire community to enjoy," said **Bob Ross**, president and CEO of Inasmuch Foundation. "The new indoor ski experience offers yet another adventure at the Boathouse District, but more importantly, it's bringing a life experience to our underserved youth who may never have the opportunity to ski or snowboard."

Riversport Foundation COO **Stephen Ball** told *Amusement Today*: "The foundation has always looked for things that are unique or first of its kind, at least to the region. We are the only outdoor rowing river in the world with sta-



Because of its treadmill nature, six people can use the ski machine at one time (above). **Ski OKC** will provide all needed equipment for visitors wanting to give indoor skiing a try (right). COURTESY RIVERSPORT FOUNDATION

dium lights. We can race after dark on the river. The ropes course at the time was the tallest when they put that in and the tallest **Wiegand** slides in the world. It's the same with the ski machine. There's nowhere else in Oklahoma you can get on a ski machine. It changes the whole dynamic. It's been good for us this year in particular. [COVID] has had an impact on the overall operation, but with things we do by their very nature being outside has helped us navigate this year."

Supplied by Netherlands-based company **Alpine Engineering**, the indoor ski simulator is covered in a specially developed artificial ski grass called **PoleSnow**. The low-friction fibers are misted with water to create a feeling similar to real snow. The moving surface — such as on a treadmill — creates an "infinite" hill. The incline can be increased to quickly go from a blue (intermediate) ski run to the equivalent of a black (expert) run in seconds. A ramp can be added to train individuals to practice jumps.

"You get that sense of elevation change," said Ball.

"Riversport will be the first place in the world you can snow ski, surf and whitewater raft all in one location," said **Riversport Executive Director Mike Knopp**. "Ski OKC will be open to passholders throughout the season, and we'll offer ski and snowboard lessons. In the fall we'll offer additional sessions for people to brush up on their skills before they head out on their annual ski trip."

The **Ski OKC** installation will have a wide demographic. Ball feels it can reach people from eight to 80.

"People who know how to ski are going to come enjoy this," he told *AT*, "But for people who have always dreamed of learning to ski or have a trip planned, this is a great opportunity for them to take advantage of getting some skills down."

Participants can bring their own skis if they are comfortable in doing so, as long as the skis themselves are coated in a way that is suitable for the artificial surface. However, **Ski OKC** will take care



of all visitors' needs. It is not a requirement to bring anything.

Because of various skill levels, the programming can adapt to what's best for each participant, not to mention that six people can ski or snowboard at one time. An adjustable bar helps kids hold on to something to balance as they learn, as well as assistance by instructors. Camps will also be available for beginners.

"We are getting a projector to map down on the surface slope to help with techniques but can also provide like a virtual reality game, which will really be attractive to younger kids. It becomes less about learning

the hard skill and more about playing the game. But before they know it, they have just learned how to ski," said Ball.

Ski OKC is going in an existing building in the **Whitewater Center**. Because of its indoor nature, **Riversport** sees the year-round operation as a boon to what would generally be considered an off season.

Ball notes that there is no grounds admission, so people can come to watch. Visitors can purchase day passes to the complex to participate in activities they choose or enjoy a year-long season pass.

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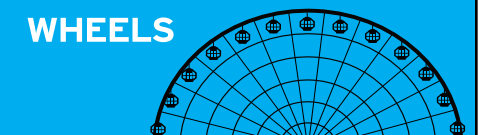
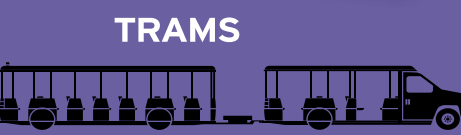
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Extreme spinning coaster will offer unique experience

Mack Rides expected to deliver solid season for Plopsa De Panne

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

A D I N K E R K E - D E PANNE, Flemish Region, Belgium — Following a turbulent 2020, every park is looking to a brighter new year and new season for attendance and revenue to return to something that looks a little more normal. **Plopsa De Panne** is making it extra exciting for guests to return with a new, noteworthy roller coaster.

Provided by **Mack Rides**, the yet-unnamed ride has been in the works for some time, with many details released even before the pandemic started. Currently, the ride is closing in on completing the construction phase.

"Passengers will do several inversions during the ride while the carts also rotate around their axis. At the moment, there are only 'normal' spinning coasters in Europe that do not overturn. So, it will be a real experience for the visitor and a unique experience in Europe," said **Chelsea Vanhullebusch**, marketing, Plopsa De Panne.

Part of the manufacturer's newest product line, the Mack coaster is an Xtreme Spinning Coaster model. It will be the second such coaster to debut. The first was in the U.S. in Branson, Missouri, in 2018.

Track length is 3,018 feet, none of which is being taken up by lift hills thanks to two launched sections. Top height is more than 108 feet tall and speeds are expected to be 56 mph.

Fans following the construction process are witness-



Guests will reach a top height of 108 feet on the new attraction.

COURTESY PLOPSA DE PANNE



The new coaster from Mack Rides, the latest in the company's Xtreme Spinning Coaster model, features two launches, 3,018 feet of track and a top speed of 56 mph. COURTESY PLOPSA DE PANNE



ing much of the ride being erected over water. Its placement will undoubtedly add to the "cool" factor.

"The ride is passing by our SuperSplash ride from 2006, so the passengers of either attraction will have a chance to get a glimpse of the other ride," said **Maximilian Roeser**, head of marketing, Mack Rides.

When asked by *Amusement Today* if the placement created any challenges, Roeser said, "Indeed. We had to place the track of the ride in an area where the splash won't affect the coaster. Otherwise we would have an unwanted splash effect on our new coaster. We also had to take special precautions with all the foundations that are placed inside the lake to not interfere with the channel of the SuperSplash ride."

"The Xtreme Spinning Coaster will invade the entire park," Vanhullebusch told AT. "The Xtreme Spinning Coaster can be seen from afar on the

highway and will change the entire skyline of the park, giving it a whole new dimension."

Before approaching Mack Rides, Plopsa De Panne management had specific ideas in mind.

"Plopsa Group CEO **Steve van den Kerkhoff** was visiting **Silver Dollar City** and testing **Time Traveler** in Branson. I think this ride gives a great impression what this coaster is capable of and that it's not a dizzying motion but a fun coaster to ride," said Roeser. "The marketing goal was pretty clear: Young adults and thrill seekers are the main target group for this ride, but we think the ride characteristics are suitable for families as well."

"Our CEO, **Steve Van den Kerkhof**, had already heard many good references about the similar coaster in **Silver Dollar City**," said Vanhullebusch. "When he visited the park and coaster last year, he was blown

away by it."

In addition to two launched sections, five inversions will tumble riders in ways unique to the other park's coasters. Right from the station is a slow heartline roll known to coaster fans as a Jojo roll. Following the first launch, hills, drops and flips ensue. A double-inverting element called the banana roll is a favorite of Roeser.

"The banana roll is our approach to turn the train around and get back into the direction of the station. You start with an uphill curve and as you think you are going into a cobra roll. We end the motion and get the coaster back to the ground. Imagine a cobra roll but just not as flexed as such," he said. "With a spinning car, this element looks insane from the outside."

Five inversions pushes the boundaries of this model first debuted at **Silver Dollar City**.

"That's a new record indeed," said Roeser. "We had an open approach to this lay-

out, so that our design team could suggest the wildest elements we can physically do with the hardware. And therefore we came up with the banana roll or the double inverting dive loop that looks awesome in the renderings. I am really looking forward to the opening."

The second launch works twofold as a blocking system as well, as was seen on the dual-launched Mack coaster, **Copperhead Strike**, at **Carowinds** in 2019.

No rides were needed to be removed or relocated for the installation of the new coaster. Construction of the ride itself should be complete in early 2021.

"We want to make something very beautiful and very special out of it. We still need some time, but we think we can open it just before the summer," Vanhullebusch said.

The ride is being installed by **RCS GmbH**. It is reported to be an investment of €15,000,000 (\$18.15 million).

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Indiana Beach saves famous roller coaster, purchases Polyp

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MONTICELLO, Ind. — Following the crowd-pleasing salvation of **Indiana Beach** by businessman **Gene Staples** in spring of 2020, the family park located on Lake Shaffer found new cheers on social media. As the holidays began to shift into high gear, the park made a thrilling announcement. Two new rides had been acquired by the park, one of them a world-famous roller coaster.

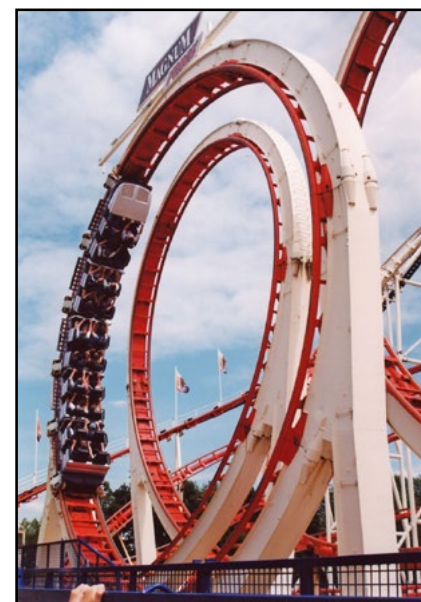
When created by **Anton Schwarzkopf**, an **IAAPA** Hall of Fame member, it continued a series of portable coasters that became signature rides for traveling shows. Dubbed **Dreier Looping**, it was the world's first coaster to feature three vertical loops. Schwarzkopf's following models featured four and five inversions.

In addition, a new flat ride is being brought into the fold. Like the coaster, this **Polyp** ride (also from Schwarzkopf) has a history behind it.

Indiana Beach COO **Tom Crisci** talked to *Amusement Today* about the additions coming in the months ahead. "Gene's always looking for new rides. During this year specifically, we had a relatively good year versus the majority of the industry," he said. "A lot of people proactively reach out to us. Once we found the **Polyp** came from our hometown park growing up, that was a no brainer. Gene went on the road to look at that. We've had [the ride] on site for quite some time. Amazingly, we



The triple-loop roller coaster — the first ever built to feature three vertical loops — will become the tallest coaster at Indiana Beach. When owned by Flamingoland in England (above right), the portable coaster was known as **Magnum Force**. AT/TIM BALDWIN



were able to keep that relatively quiet. Anytime something [surfaces] from Kiddieland, that's a top priority for Gene to try to get it."

The flat ride will offer spinning fun for families. The coaster will be a high-speed thriller. Designed by **Werner Stengel** for Schwarzkopf, the powerful triple-loop monster will be the tallest coaster at the park, standing at 111 feet tall. Even with its compact nature, it still boasts 3,440 feet of track. Top speed is 53 mph. As of press time, the new ride has yet to be named.

"The trip to Mexico yielded a lot more fruit of the labor," said Crisci. "We know the coaster is going to be a big task for our maintenance team this off season. We flew down and watched it run. We filmed it and took photos of every bolt and screw. Once

shipped back here, we're prepared to assemble it correctly. Maintenance folks were down there for about two months."

The park is aware of the full history of the ride, which dates back to 1984. It had operated on the German fair circuit for 12 years before finding homes in Malaysia, England and Mexico.

"This acquisition has sent shockwaves globally," said Crisci, remarking on the positive feedback seen on social media.

"I rode the coaster in 2001 when it was **Magnum Force** at **Flamingo Land**. I personally think it is one of the best Schwarzkopf creations ever," said **David Dragun**, preservation director, **American Coaster Enthusiasts**. "The speed, intensity and nonstop action make it an amazing coaster. I applaud Indiana

Beach and Gene Staples for purchasing and restoring this great ride."

"This is an amazing Schwarzkopf and with the proper safety inspections, maintenance and care, we anticipate this being one of the premier coasters, not only at our park, but in the region!" said Crisci.

Crisci realizes safety requirements are more stringent in the United States and reports that the park is on top of it.

"We're more concerned with having inspections done here in the States once everything arrives and is built. I cannot stress enough that the safety of our guests will always be our top priority. Not one train will roll on the tracks without multiple levels of sign-offs from trusted industry experts," he said. "Our plans are to work with industry safety consultants to complete all of the necessary updates. Once these updates are completed and everything passes inspections, then and only then will we open the

ride to the public."

The target is to have the ride operating in 2021, but the park is committed to doing it right.

"Pound for pound, I'll put our maintenance team against any major park in the country. We're fortunate to have a very solid, maintenance crew. They are some of the best in the business," Crisci told AT. "They're the ones keeping everyone safe."

While not absolutely finalized, the coaster is expected to be erected near the **S&S El Loco** called **Steel Hawg**.

Crisci hints that during the time of acquisitions, more additions are in the works for the next few years. Although 70% percent of the property is dedicated to campgrounds, the park physically has 400 acres to work with. The park feels those visitors are also an important part of the community.

"Some of the things we were able to get will be of value to our campers as well," Crisci said.

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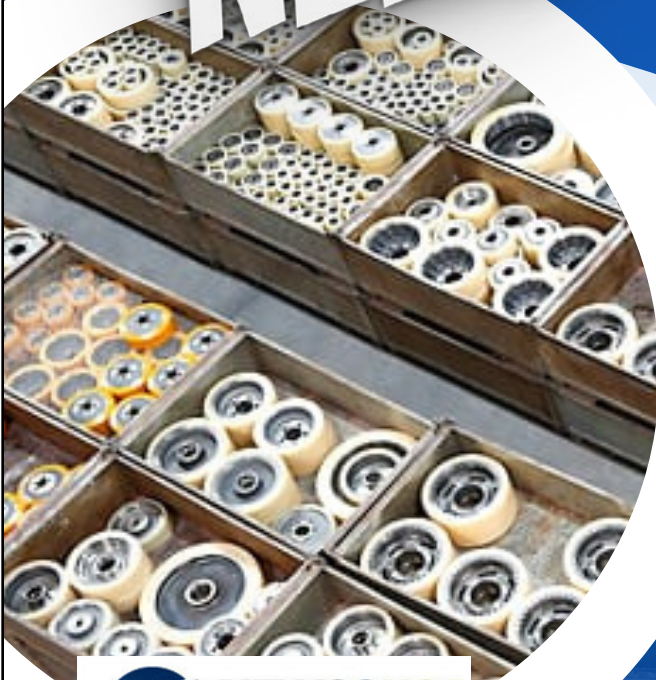
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The **Polyp** ride is seen here at auction when Kiddieland in Melrose Park, Illinois, closed in 2006. COURTESY INDIANA BEACH

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Knoebels Amusement Resort: looking back and looking ahead

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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ELYSBURG, Pennsylvania – The 2020 season was one for the record books with COVID-19 crippling all amusement operations to one extent or another. *Amusement Today* spoke with **Brian Knoebel**, a fourth-generation co-owner of **Knoebels Amusement Resort**, reflecting back and looking ahead. He talked about projects that have been started, ones that are ready to begin and various aspects of the operation.

What staffing concerns and challenges did the park experience this year?

Brian Knoebel: “Due to the pandemic, Knoebels finally opened July 1, 2020, and, to much dismay, some team-members were not part of the team from last season [2019]. We typically have as many as 2,300 people on our payroll, but last season we were operating with only 1,323. We generally use three generations of employees, but last year was much different. Many of the older generation did not work due to the chance of catching the virus. The youngest generation found employment elsewhere or decided not to work at all since fall sports or college would be starting mid-August. Also due to the virus, we were unable to use international students as we have the previous few years so that hurt us as well. All we can do is hope and pray there will be a vaccine in the near future so we can resume some sort of normalcy.”

Why was the Flying Turns modified with the addition of a fourth lift hill?

“There wasn’t one particular reason we chose to install the fourth lift hill on the Flying Turns...there were quite a few reasons! By lowering turn 10, the trains could operate at a faster speed which made it more thrilling. This increased our ride capacity and we now have the ability to install a fourth train during the day. Please understand the ride was very temperature sensitive and this project has given us the ability to open on time as well as provide more ERT opportunities. This project made our morning inspection team much happier; each morning they would have to load weight in and out of the trains for test



Aerial view of the new construction site at Knoebels (above). Throughout 2020, a fourth lift hill was added (below left). The chain idler wheel (below right) for the additional lift was made by Miller/Baker and once ran on the Willow Mill Park Red Streaker in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. COURTESY KNOEBELS AMUSEMENT RESORT; AT/GARY SLADE



runs before turning it over to the ride operators.”

NOTE: The chain idler wheel for the additional lift was made by Miller/Baker and once ran on the **Willow Mill Park Red Streaker** in Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Can you elaborate on the cars installed on Impulse?

“After many conversations with Zierer and ART Product GmbH, we chose to replace the original Zierer cars with ones manufactured by ART. The new cars have created a smoother ride experience and more comfortable lap bar that will not push on your stomach like the previous ones so often did. We are pleased to report our fans seem to be happy with the new cars. An important factor in our decision making was being able to keep the rider height at 48 inches. The new cars also eliminated the need for the foam molded helper seat insert we previously used which sadly slowed our capacity down. Once the sun sets behind Phoenix, you’ll see the new cars lighting up the

night sky with LEDs.”

Is a fourth train in the works for the Pioneer Train?

“On busy days we are able to operate three individual trains at one time on our 1.5-mile Pioneer Train ride. During the [2019] off-season we constructed a new roof/building to store the trains and added a track to house a fourth train. I’m not so sure you’ll see an operable fourth train in 2021 but hopefully you’ll see one at some point.”

Why was the Giant Wheel given a lighting makeover?

“I wish LEDs would last forever, but as you know, nothing lasts forever. We decided to upgrade the lighting package on our Giant Wheel and started on this project on November 2. We only had a short window to transform from Halloween to Christmas which is why we needed to start right away. This new light package will give us the opportunity to have light shows themed to Independence Day, Halloween, Christmas and even a gender reveal! Our

new Christmas lights drive-through experience called Joy Through the Grove began the night after Thanksgiving showcasing our new LEDs.”

Eworks Pro was the vendor of the lighting package.

Is there a timetable update on the Wisdom Tornado the park purchased?

“Allow me to hit rewind to November 22, 2019. Rick, Dad, and I were on the floor of IAAPA Expo 2019 and Dad said to us, ‘Ok, what’s next?’ I replied, ‘I think we need to buy a ride. We are removing the 1001 Nights and raising our Pay One Price. I feel our guests will be upset unless we offer a new ride to them.’ Dad said, ‘Ok, what ride?’ I said, ‘I like the **Wisdom Tornado**, it’s nostalgic and something we’ve discussed through the years.’ Dad quickly answered, ‘Ok, let’s go buy a Tornado.’ And we did!

“Working with Wisdom was as easy as Sunday morning, and they were open to all our suggestions. They had the ride completed right around the time COVID-19

forced our nation to close down. At this point we had no idea whether Knoebels would open in 2020, so we asked them to just hold it for now. A few months passed and we retrieved it from Merino, Colorado. We have it stored off-site and are anticipating its arrival in the coming months. Obviously, it was supposed to be new for 2020, well, guess what is NEW FOR 2021?! We are very excited for this ride to open and anticipate it will be a wonderful addition to our lineup this season.”

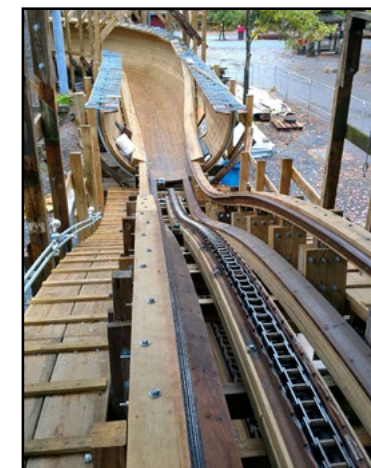
With the passing of Chuck Cesari, what changes (menu and/or operational) were implemented at the Alamo restaurant?

“Yes, our long-time friend and team-member **Chuck Cesari** passed away at the end of the 2019 season. He was very dedicated, creative, great at helping our business and played an integral role helping us win many Golden Ticket Awards for Best Food. His long-time assistant, **Clyde Bills** stepped up and has made us very proud. Due to the pandemic, the restaurant had to operate at limited capacity and we haven’t been able to see Clyde’s potential yet, but I know he has some wonderful ideas up his sleeve and I’m certain they will be a hit.”

Were any changes made to the food items offered throughout the park?

“This past season we added some creative offerings such as mac and cheese bowls with a variety of toppings; new flavors to our existing

► See KNOEBELS, page 19



The new lift begins near the transfer area shed. COURTESY KNOEBELS AMUSEMENT RESORT

►KNOEBELS

Continued from page 18

funnel cakes; more Dole Whip flavors; a Mardi Gras chicken sandwich; pumpkin pie and apple pie [flavors] to our milkshakes, and a variety of dips such as buffalo chicken, hoagie and pumpkin to name a few. I'm going to stop there as my belly is GROWLING!"

Will the Italian Trapeze return in 2021?

"As you know, the Italian Trapeze [Zamperla, Inc.] was closed in 2018 and 2019, but we are very excited about the reappearance of this ride in 2021! It's been refurbished with some added safety measures. The wind in your face while sailing over kids steering the motorboats with the aroma of caramel corn is second to none! This ride has been a fan favorite since Dad tasked family friend **Alberto Zamperla** to manufacture one for Knoebels."

What about creative revenue generation?

"One example is the date specific pre-purchased handstamps we offered in 2020. Although this isn't new to



Knoebels' Giant Wheel received a lighting make-over from Eworks Pro. COURTESY KNOEBELS AMUSEMENT RESORT

some parks, it was new to us. Whether we continue to offer this in 2021 is still undecided, but it certainly helps gauge the crowd we can expect."

Will the park be making any refinements for the upcoming 2021 season?

"We are discussing many

fun projects this off-season. Two of them are a way to better the customer experience by redesigning our queues at the grand carousel and the motorboats. Our lines get a little lengthy on the weekends and this would allow for better social distancing and get the crowd off the midway. We are also refurbish-

ing our merry mixer."

What direction will the park head this year?

"We are hearing 2021 will only be slightly better than 2020. Some agencies have prepared us, [saying] we might not see an uptick in our industry until early July. This makes it quite challenging when trying to create an operating calendar. Obviously, we are hopeful for a spectacular dry weather summer, but we are realists and are prepared we might not get our wish. We are blessed to have so many fans. It is humbling to know they will come visit rain or shine!"

I understand you have three operational calendar options on the table. What can you tell us about that?

"As I previously mentioned, we have no idea what to expect in 2021 so we are currently discussing three different options. One option is a calendar similar to that [you have] seen in the past. This option will only be possible if a vaccine is available. A second calendar will be a scaled back version with condensed hours. The last calendar we

are discussing is a hybrid version. The trend in the industry has been to open earlier and close earlier, but, in our opinion, Knoebels is most charming at dusk when the lights begin to turn on."

Two Schwarzkopf Bayern Kurves have been spotted in the parking lot. What can you tell us?

"Oh? There's a Bayern Kurve on property?" 😊

The Joy Through the Grove drive-thru Christmas light experience was new. Was it well received?

"This is something our family has talked about for years and with the current social distancing recommendations in place, 2020 was definitely the year to make it happen. Although tired from a challenging summer and fall, our team welcomed the task of taking down our Halloween decorations and beginning to transform into Christmas. We couldn't be more proud of everyone pitching in to make this dream a reality! Sleighbells ring, are ya listenin'..."

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Park Post-its



AT: Pam Sherborne
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Carolina Beach Land Holdings LLC, a developer owning multiple lots in the boardwalk area of Carolina Beach, North Carolina, submitted an expansion and extension proposal to the local planning committee last month.

The proposal, if approved, would include the expansion and extension of a conditional use permit to allow for ride placements on lots around the area owned by Carolina Beach Land Holdings LLC.

That area along the eastern seaboard has seen a lot of growth over the years that has infringed on the area where the rides are located. Being able to move some of the existing rides that are brought in for six months a year to multiple locations will open up the space.

This effort is to keep the rides at the beach. The rides have been located at the **Carolina Beach Boardwalk** since 2009. The applicant is requesting an extension of five years, 2021-2026.

Sydney, Australia's **Luna Park's** iconic grinning facade has loomed large over Sydney Harbour for 85 years. It's about to get a \$30 million (US\$22.9 million) facelift.

A plan to transform the fun park was unveiled last month. The upgrade will include nine new rides, with six new children's rides, a thrill ride, a family roller coaster as well as a new inline-seating coaster.

Officials said every ride and attraction would comply with regulations relating to noise, height, lights and hours of operation that had been in place since 2004.

The investment will create more than 2,500 direct and indirect jobs during construction, boost tourism and help in the economic recovery of New South Wales post-COVID-19.

The park will close for renovations on January 27 and re-open in mid-June.

Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group emerged from court protection with new owners, a focus on the world's biggest cities and a plan to open U.S. shows as early as next summer.

Cirque's Las Vegas-based shows and a new production at **Walt Disney World Resorts** are likely to resume first, according to Chief Executive Officer **Daniel Lamarre**, who kept his job after the restructuring. While some touring shows may get back on the road next year, the Montreal-based company targets 2022 to return to levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cirque, which is now owned by former creditors including **Catalyst Capital Group Inc.**, also wants touring shows to devote more time to large markets like New York, Toronto or Tokyo, and less to smaller destinations, according to Lamarre.

The company hasn't decided yet if the number of productions will be scaled back. The live performance company filed for credi-

tor protection in June after the pandemic forced it to shut down all of its 44 shows.

Two shows in China and Mexico have so far resumed operations. Cirque signed extensions for five of its Vegas shows, including four at **MGM Resorts International** properties, for a combined 19 years.

Besides Catalyst, prominent owners include **Sound Point Capital Management LP**, **CBAM Partners** and **Benefit Street Partners**.

There are no plans to sell any of the assets Cirque has added in recent years.

Bristol Zoo, located in Bristol, U.K., has announced it will relocate from its current site to the outskirts of the city to safeguard its future.

The site in Clifton will be sold and the zoo will move to its **Wild Place Project** site in South Gloucestershire. The zoo has been at Clifton since it began in 1836.

Bosses said the site will stay open until late 2022. The new zoo would open in early 2024.

Bristol Zoological Society, which owns and operates both Bristol Zoo Gardens in Clifton and Wild Place Project, said the zoo had seen declining attendance numbers over the last years. It reported an operating loss in four of the past six years.

The zoo had been facing challenges before this year's COVID-19 pandemic, but 2020 forced officials to begin rethinking its plans for the future.

The new zoo would have conservation and sustainability at its heart, where animals will have the space and facilities to thrive.

On Monday, November 23, **Aquarium at the Boardwalk**, Branson, Missouri, opened for business.

Visitors can expect to enjoy 10 exciting zones full of fish and fun; more than 250 different animal species in 400,000 gallons of saltwater including sharks, seahorses, sting-rays, lionfish, octopi and eels; an original 5-D submarine adventure to the bottom of the sea; more than 7,200 individual sea animals, soon to exceed 10,000 and multiple photo ops including a seahorse carousel and a mermaid tail and triden.

There also are two mirrored art installations that give the sense of infinite ocean life, a 24-foot-high kelp forest climbing structure for kids, and a gorgeous 16-foot view of a coral reef.

The **Texas State Aquarium** is inching closer to construction of a new rescue center, a facility planned to better house its existing programs dedicated to rehabilitation of marine wildlife such as dolphins, turtles and shorebirds.

The **Port of Corpus Christi Commission** on Tuesday signed off on a funding agreement that includes a \$2.5 million grant commitment that would further those plans, which call for the development of a \$15 million facility adjacent to the aquarium's main campus.

Completion is expected in the next four to five months.

The decades-long program currently operates in a steel warehouse on port-owned property, off the Rincon Channel.

At 20,000 square-feet, the planned facility on North Beach would be larger and more modern. Among its features is expanded space for laboratory and surgical activities.

The aquarium has become well-known for its work in restoring the health of thousands of marine inhabitants over the years.

The new center would be accessible to the public without charge.

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Fourth Dimension Fun Center opens to public

FREDERICK, Md. — The finishing touches have been applied to **Fourth Dimension Fun Center**, a brand new, 38,000-square-foot entertainment complex located in the Washington D.C. metro area. The bowling-anchored entertainment destination opened its doors in December, offering a dynamic combination of attractions offerings under one roof.

Fourth Dimension, which incorporates the vision of developer **Brian Holzberger**, features 16 lanes of luxury bowling, an immersive motion theater experience, heavily themed laser tag arena, escape rooms, full redemption-based arcade and a variety of adult-focused social activities. The facility also offers a premium-level dining experience, with seasonal menus crafted by its regionally-known culinary team as well as a full bar and tap program that delivers custom cocktails and a front row seat in viewing some of the largest media screens in the marketplace.

"I'm relieved and stressed out at the same time," Holzberger said about finishing work on the facility. "I'm happy that we're through the construction phase, but very concerned as to what the future will hold with us getting through COVID and getting our name out into the public."

Holzberger suspects demand for the FEC will be high, especially for families who have been stuck in the house and looking for an outlet for their kids. He said the staff will remain vigilant to ensure the 50 percent capacity and social distancing rules are followed.

The Holzberger family selected industry consultant **Amusement Entertainment Management** to spearhead the project's development, including the formulation of the business case, investment and financing strategy, and coordination plan. The two-year undertaking included the ground-up construction of the building, which has been designed to support family, adult, and corporate user groups through careful placement of private event, conference, and lounge areas. The facility's industrial chic design and use of premium quality materials throughout sets a new standard for the Frederick marketplace, and promises to deliver a satisfying experience for both residents and visitors to the D.C. metro area.

"I always wanted some place that I could take my parents and my kids, and we all have something that we love in the same place," Holzberger added. "And I think that's what we've got here."

Shuffleboard, billiards and other table games are available by the bowling alley, while a 6,000-square-foot arcade space offers more for kids. One of its offerings is a 3D virtual reality ride where riders will use blasters to shoot targets at the screen while seated in moving chairs.



Featuring luxury bowling lanes (above) and a heavily themed laser tag arena (right), Fourth Dimension Fun Center is the result of Amusement Entertainment Management bringing of developer Brian Holzberger's vision to life.
COURTESY FOURTH DIMENSION FUN CENTER



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson
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The first phase of **Dezerland Park**, an indoor attraction on International Drive in Orlando, opened to the public December 14. Go-karts, bowling lanes and arcade games are now available in the space, which eventually will feature the Auto Experience, a privately owned selection of cars scheduled to be ready in early 2021.

"We're previewing to the local community what we have to offer and also fine-tuning our operational skills and whatnot," said **Scott Maffei**, general manager.

A trampoline park, a pinball-specific section and a James Bond-themed lounge will come onboard in coming weeks, along with the Auto Experience, which takes up about 60% of the building's space. Dezerland Park is operating in the structure that has been known as Aragon and Festival Bay in the past.

There is no admission fee for Dezerland; visitors will pay per experience, including for the future auto collection. "For go-karts, participants can buy one race — taking about 15 minutes — or a three- or five-race combo," said **Sebastian Mochkovsky**, a partner in the attractions and CEO of **Sacoa**, which created the cashless-transaction system used at Dezerland.

Virtual golf-themed entertainment company **X-Golf America** is planning an expansion in several cities across the U.S. next year, including in Charlotte, North Carolina. X-Golf America offers an indoor golf simulation experience alongside a bar and restaurant. The company began expanding this year and now has 25 locations.

The move comes on the heels of golf-tech entertainment venue **Topgolf** getting ready to open its second Charlotte location. And a Topgolf rival, **Drive Shack**, also is looking to expand in the city.

X-Golf American indoor venues cover less than 10,000 square feet, compared to Topgolf's multi-level, indoor-outdoor expansive 65,000-square-foot venues where players aim for targets.

The South Korea corporation has a U.S. headquarters in Los Angeles. It plans to more than double in size in 2021 with up to 35 additional venues. That includes opening in cities like Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and Kansas City, Kansas, in addition to the Charlotte location.

Ventola Projects, a U.K.-based lighting specialist, is set to install its signature VaVR LED Lighting at the **Monster Mini Golf** location in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The Monster Mini Golf FEC, which has locations throughout the U.S., offers guests a range of entertainment, including glow-in-the-dark mini-golf, mini-bowling, laser tag and a laser maze. The company will soon benefit from Ventola's color and mood-changing lighting effects to enhance the fun and interactive experience.

"We're really pleased to be enhancing the lighting experience at yet another Monster Mini Golf outlet," said Ventola Projects founder, **Mick Ventola**. "These indoor games for kids, families and couples are only increasing in popularity, as well as becoming ever advanced, with glow in the dark themes, interactive animatronics and quirky course designs."

A ceremony featuring live entertainment, giveaways and games marked the opening of the new **Altitude** trampoline park in Kissimmee, Florida. The trampoline park operating chain has opened this latest venue with more than 35,000 square feet of space and activities for all ages.

A ninja course and augmented reality trampoline games are features of the new venue. It also has a reaction wall, a Valo Jump, party rooms and zip lines.

"It's an absolute flagship park with the latest in trampoline attractions including interactive trampoline gaming systems," said Altitude Kissimmee partner **Brantley Smith**.

Round Two — Peosta, Iowa's new bowling alley and family entertainment center — is officially open for business. The FEC announced online that December 12 was its official opening day.

The business is owned by **Dave and Tracie Pettera**, and its name is a nod to the fact that this is the couple's second such undertaking. Their previous business, **Cascade Lanes & Lounge**, and an attached **Happy Joe's Pizza** suffered heavy damage in a fire in August 2019.

The new, 17,500-square-foot facility has 12 bowling lanes, an arcade area and a full-service bar and restaurant featuring food from Dubuque restaurant **Shot Tower Inn**. Plans call for an outdoor patio and at least two sand volleyball courts open for next summer as part of the more-than-\$3 million project.

Virtuix, creator of the Omni Arena virtual reality esports attraction, has unveiled **Dead Zone: Zombies**, its latest game for Omni Arena. In **Dead Zone**, teams of up to four players cooperate to fight hordes of zombies, collect supplies, and survive a zombie apocalypse.

"Dead Zone is Omni Arena's most thrilling and terrifying game to date," said **Jan Goetgeluk**, Virtuix's founder and CEO. "We designed the game to attract high repeat play. It's easy for anyone to play, but thanks to its variety and depth, it offers a new experience every time."

Dead Zone will be added to Omni Arena's weekly and monthly esports tournaments. The top teams on **Dead Zone's** global leaderboard will win cash prizes from a \$100,000 prize pool. The game will be added to Omni Arena's weekly and monthly esports tournaments. The top teams on **Dead Zone's** global leaderboard will win cash prizes from a \$100,000 prize pool.



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North Pole Productions creates lighting displays for multiple fairs

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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NORTH ADAMS, Mass. — Tammy Peters has been one busy woman during the fourth quarter of last year. That is because she owns **North Pole Productions**, a company that provides holiday lighting displays for various facilities, including community parks, racetracks, museums, and fairgrounds — any place that has the right amount of acreage and the ability to stage waiting vehicles. This past season her company produced 11 of their own shows and assisted a client with three additional ones.

The very first customer was in 2001, for a non-profit organization in Binghamton, New York. They are an advocacy group for people with disabilities. Peters explained the process: “The executive director is visually impaired, however, [she] is a brilliant business-woman. I said to her, ‘I have the perfect fund raiser for you. The community will know your name with this family-friendly show at the busiest time of the year.’ And so, even though she herself really couldn’t experience the full enjoyment of the production, the show was born and operated for 10 years as their main fundraising event! And the community DID know their name after a short while.”

Peters has a varied background. She ran a commercial Christmas decorating business in 1998. Prior to that, Peters was in fundraising, public



North Pole Productions got started 20 years ago with one show for an advocacy group in Binghamton, New York. In 2020, it produced 11 shows and assisted with three others for a client. Lead time can take up to a year for the drive-thru that can cover up to two miles. COURTESY NORTH POLE PRODUCTIONS



relations and marketing for a **United Way** operation. She began North Pole Productions as a high-end fundraiser for non-profits. “I truly felt it was a great way to raise funds and give something back to the

community at the same time,” she said.

“Our very first fair was **The Erie County Fair** in Hamburg, New York. We started that show in 2005. Now in its 16th year, The Fairgrounds Festival



of Lights is going strong,” said Peters. This past season North Pole Productions also worked with the **South Carolina State Fair**, Columbia; the **Alaska State Fair**, Palmer; the **Old Threshers Reunion**, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa; **Hillsborough County Fairgrounds**, Dover, Florida, along with several other properties throughout the country.

Peters explained the process when working with a fair. “Usually, our work begins with the CEO and/or marketing/events director. Once the financial end is worked out, the CEO may take a lesser role in the project unless they truly enjoy the event. [With] many of our clients, I have a continual relationship with the CEO, however, I may work with staff on the day-to-day developments of the show.”

Depending on the size of the show, the complexity of the displays and the amount of computerization, it can take 10 to 20 days to install a quality show. The drive-thrus can run anywhere between one

to two miles in length. North Pole Productions prides itself on paying attention to details.

COVID-19 provided additional challenges and practices. “Several of our clients who ordinarily would host a Santa’s Village along with their drive-thru shows have opted to cancel that part of their event,” said Peters. “However, the drive-thru light shows are probably the safest form of holiday entertainment out there because you do not have to get out of your car. You can stay with your family in the comfort and safety of your own vehicle. You can also buy your ticket on-line, so you really do not need to interact with a person at the ticket booth. Just show the bar code to the booth attendant and off you go! It’s that simple.”

Peters talked about the uniqueness of her “holiday parks” as she refers to them. “No two of our shows are the same because no two facilities

► See **LIGHTS**, page 27

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North Pole Productions company worked with four fairs: Erie County Fair in Hamburg, New York; South Carolina State Fair, Columbia; the Alaska State Fair, Palmer; and the Hillsborough County Fairgrounds, Dover, Florida. COURTESY NORTH POLE PRODUCTIONS

►LIGHTS

Continued from page 26

are the same. We have a different philosophy than most in our industry. Our shows are light shows, however, we are in the show business industry. Our slogan is "Producers of memorable experiences." We truly hope that those who come and enjoy our shows have a memorable experience and will come year after year, as we change our shows and displays each year."

The name selected has an interesting history. Peters said, "As a little girl, our family made numerous trips to **Santa's Workshop** in North Pole, New York. I loved that place and knowing it was still there made me feel good to this day. One day, I was visiting with a friend trying to come up with a good name for my business, and suddenly I said, 'You know since we are dealing with Christmas lights, it should be something like North Pole. And since we are producing shows we should add Productions.' And that's how it came to be...North Pole Productions."

Peters said they are already working on 2021 shows: "We began production right after this holiday season for next year. It truly does take a year to produce a show. Between the financing, marketing, production of displays, etc, you need at least eight months to a year to really produce a quality show."

North Pole Productions has been developing holiday parks that are designed for community enjoyment since 2001 and specializes in utilizing holiday lighting displays to turn community parks or fairgrounds into enchanting and magical wonderland of lights.

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Holiday Magic at Western Washington State Fair



Western Washington State Fair, Puyallup, offered Holiday Magic, a festive drive-thru experience. Billed as breathtaking lights and whimsical displays, this inaugural event began December 4 and ran through January 3 and featured 10 different components. In addition to the lights, highlights included fair food vendors selling snacks and drinks, a scavenger hunt, snowflake 3D glasses, holiday/fair merchandise and a hometown holiday forest of trees decorated by local community and service organizations. Many of the rides were decorated as well, including the 1935 John Miller/Walker LeRoy wooden roller coaster, with the abominable snowman out front and the giant slide, with penguins racing down the slide with polar bears at the bottom to catch them. There is even a 100-foot-long drive-through tunnel. Cost was \$25 per car, with tickets for designated entry times. COURTESY HOLLY BALL/WASHINGTON FAIR FOUNDATION, MELANIE ROBINSON



MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

In early December, the **Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo** announced the event originally scheduled for March 2 – 21, featuring competitions, concerts and entertainment, carnival and other attractions and activities is now scheduled for May 4 – 23, pending COVID-19 health status. The Junior Livestock and Horse Show competitions will still be held in March, as previously announced.

"The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is truly a community event that rodeo fans look forward to each and every year," said **Chris Boleman**, rodeo president and CEO, in a release. "With the evolving health situation, we have made the decision to move the 2021 rodeo from March to May. We remain dedicated to fulfilling our mission to support Texas youth and hosting a long-time Houston tradition."

There are no guarantees in the current environment, but moving the dates of the 2021 rodeo out by two months provides a better opportunity to host the events. Additional details surrounding the rodeo will be shared in early March, as well as the full health and safety guidelines.

Carnival operators have been left in limbo as COVID-19 is keeping their businesses shut with limited cash reserves. Such is the case of **Uncle Ringo** carnival operation in Penjuru, Singapore, where their rides are stored.

"It's not usually this full," **Joyce Lee** told *Central Asia News* (CAN) as she described the rides sitting at their storage site. Lee is the director of the traveling carnival operation, which her father, **Lee Woon Chiang**, started 36 years ago.

2020 was the year Uncle Ringo was supposed to reinvent itself, moving away from night bazaars, which had been a mainstay for the firm since inception in 1984. A permanent amusement area at **Social Innovation Park**, Punggol, was going to be a 1960s-themed replica of the defunct **Great World Amusement Park**, Singapore. That plan has been shelved indefinitely.

Operating online has proven near impossible for an industry that is about selling thrills and experiences. "Our focus is having the family down together, bonding," said Lee.

Three County Fairground, Northampton, Massachusetts, issued a warning after a Facebook event advertised a fake festival it said could have been part of an alleged scheme. The event was advertising a hot air balloon show in November to be held on the grounds. General Manager **James Przypek** told **WWLP 22News** he wants to make it clear that this was not a real event.

The event was posted by a group called the "International Balloon Festival,"

claiming there would be a Northeast Balloon Festival on the fairgrounds. The bogus operator said they were selling tickets. While the Facebook post was taken down, Przypek finds it concerning. "People are trying to take advantage of all kinds of things nowadays, so that's a little disconcerting. I'm more concerned about the people who may have purchased tickets. The people who thought they were buying from a legitimate event."

In 2019, Three County Fairground did host the Northeast Food Festival and Balloon Rally Expo, through Connecticut based **V.A.P. Events**, a group that changes its venue every year. The 204th consecutive **Three County Fair**, is slated for September 3-6.

Christmas Decor and More was a seasonal pop-up store located beside **Menard's** home improvement store in Dundas, Minnesota. Run by **GoldStar Amusements**, it opened the day after Thanksgiving, carrying fresh cut Christmas trees, wreaths, crosses, handmade holiday crafts and swag. It even delivered decorated Christmas trees to whomever the purchaser chose. Also, virtual walk throughs of the store were offered, with shipment of any crafts. Hours were 10 am – 8 pm, seven days a week through the end of the year.

Photos with Santa (aka **Mikie Featherstone**, owner) were available, using a **Sellner Manufacturing** Tilt-A-Whirl car for that picture-perfect pose. People were encouraged to bring their own props (sports equipment, goofy glasses or whatever, it's 2020!). When Santa was not on the scene, GoldStar had a table set up for kids to color and write letters to St. Nick. There was a mailbox on the spot to make sure those letters got to the big man.

Available food included Richie's Cheese Curd Tacos and Don's Crumble Beef sandwiches in the parking lot and county fair mini donuts and hot chocolate inside the building.

Organizers of the **Contra Costa County Fair**, Antioch, California, announced in mid-December they would sit out a second year with no fair. The cancellation is due to ongoing uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 fair was set for May 13-16. In a release, organizers said, "After thoughtful consideration, we do not feel it would be a responsible decision to continue with the planning of the 2021 Contra Costa County Fair, when it could potential (sic) be canceled at the last minute. There is no higher priority than the safety of our fairgrounds family, patrons, vendors, promoters and sponsors at the **Contra Costa Event Park**."

The next Contra Costa County fair is set for May 12-15, 2022.

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Strates Shows keeps things on the rails throughout 2020, beyond

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO — In March 2020, James E. Strates Shows had completed load-in and set-up at the Firefighter's Indian River County Fair in Vero Beach, Florida, when they received word that the fair had been canceled. It was just hours before the grand opening of the midway and the fair. It was also Friday the 13th. Little did Jay Strates know it would be nine-and-a-half months of no regularly scheduled shows before they were up and running again. And, as the director of administration and finance for Strates Shows, no one would blame him if he were a bit pessimistic, but that is not the case for this third-generation member of Strates in the business.

It is now the turning of the year, but also the beginning of the first regularly scheduled show to take place since March, and Strates is optimistic that the sun will shine again and good things are still on the horizon for 2021. To understand that outlook, one needs to look back at what brought Strates Shows to where it is today.

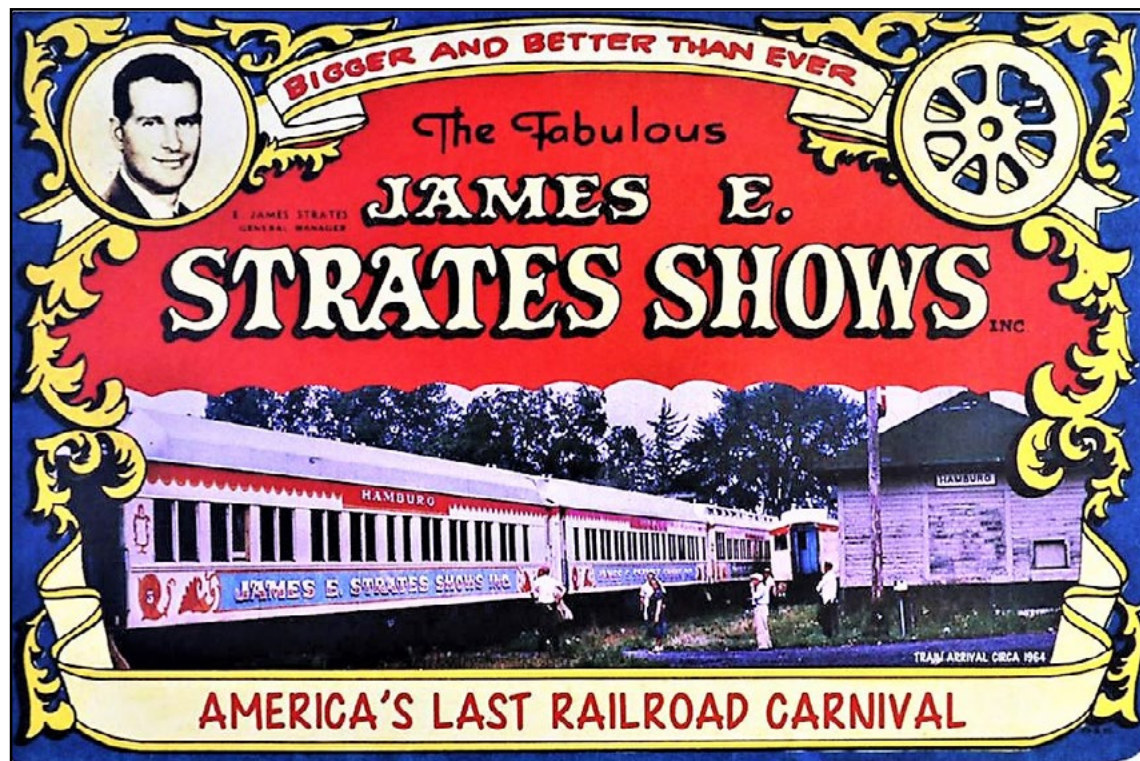
Jay Strates, grandfather, James E. Strates, lived through the pandemic of 1918, and, just a year later, he joined the carnival circuit in an athletic show as a wrestler who, under the moniker of "Young Strangler



Lewis," would take on anyone who was up for the challenge. In 1923 he purchased Southern Tier Shows and managed to keep the show operating through the Great Depression. As he emerged on the other side, he chose to rename the show James E. Strates Shows. Strates ran his show for over 35 years until his death in 1959, at which time his son, E. James Strates assumed responsibility for the carnival and continues to operate it today.

Under E. James Strates, the show was the first to introduce many now common innovations to the industry such as cooperative promotions, advance ticket sales and a centralized ticket system. He is also responsible for preserving Strates Shows as the only carnival to travel by rail, when optimal. The show maintains more than 60 rail cars and 30 trucks which transport, at times, up to some 400 employees and families who operate the rides, attractions, games and concessions.

Jay Strates recalls his early memories of living on the train for several months out of the year with his siblings. However, unlike when his father was growing up,



This commemorative postcard (circa 1964) showcases the James E. Strates Shows Train's arrival at the Erie Railroad Depot in the Village of Hamburg, New York. COURTESY STRATES SHOWS

they would return to their home in Central Florida for the school year, while his father would remain traveling with the show. The third generation of Strates, two brothers and two sisters, all remain in the business. But things are beginning to change. Strates says, "To our level, the bug has 'stuck.' But of my father's 13 grandchildren, so far, only one has chosen to stay in the business. The rest have taken other great careers in engineering, event planning and design and even interior design. Times change. Things change."

Change things did in 2020, and not only due to the pandemic. "The whole business has become very tough in regard to regulatory and compliance expenses. The State of Florida had a mandate come into effect where the fees charged to the amusement industry vendors for compliance and inspection must pay for the program as a whole. In the amusement business there are two separate areas, stationary parks and attractions and traveling operators. For traveling operators, we must have inspections at each event. That is once every five

to 10 days, where the stationary parks have compliance inspections much less frequently and are somewhat self-regulated. Because of the necessary frequency of inspections, the program for traveling shows is very expensive, and now that cost is carried over to our fees. It has almost doubled in the past year," said Strates. He also explained that in the traveling show sector, there are multiple states, each of which has their own set of requirements and fees. Strates also explained that

► See STRATES, page 30



Strates Shows is the only carnival midway to travel by railway and maintains more than 60 rail cars at its Orlando, Florida, headquarters.

AT/DAVID FAKE; COURTESY STRATES SHOWS

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New SBF attraction is ready to swing onto carnival midways



Using the tower technology from its popular Drop N' Twist rides, SBF has announced the portable Swing Tower attraction is now available for traveling midways. Available in multiple heights and themes, the Swing Tower is able to travel on a single 28-foot trailer. "It's a fun family attraction in a great portable package," stated Len Soled of Rides 4 U, which represents SBF in North America. "Based on proven technology, this new ride is ready to have guests soaring as soon as the 2021 fair and carnival season. COURTESY RIDES 4 U



Jay Strates, director of administration and finance, at the Winter Wonderland Carnival at Orlando's Waterford Lakes Town Center, the first regularly scheduled show to not be canceled since March 2020. AT/DAVID FAKE

►STRATES Continued from page 28

through conversations and lobbying, some of those new-for-2020 fees are now being waived.

Strates explained that the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) has helped considerably in keeping paychecks flowing to employees. There have been several instances where Strates has gone as far as loaning out underutilized or employees not working to competitors and other shows, to be able to provide them with continuing PPP payments.

"The traveling show industry is also hurting because we were capped on our H-2B visas this year, not to mention, many domestic employees, even when unemployed, do not want to do the hard work associated with the business or be traveling nine months out of the year. This work is a lifestyle. It's tough work with long hours. It takes a special person to find the enjoyment in this industry. There is much to be enjoyed for that special type of person," Strates said.

When asked about going forward into 2021, Strates remains very positive stating that, to date, there have been no cancellations on their circuit for 2021. Still, there will be accommodations that need to be made. For example, the show will

be traveling with approximately 25% fewer rides to allow for additional space on the midway for lines and social distancing.

"There are some very practical and smart things that must be done to keep everyone safe," he said. "But we have every reason to expect to be moving forward with our schedule in its entirety, as of right now."

Strates believes that even though attendance numbers have been down in recent years due to technology at home, in 2021 he expects that there will be a renewed interest in activities like fairs and carnivals due to people being ready to get out and do something away from their homes.

While there is still a certain nostalgia we all associate with the carnival, today the midway looks a lot different than it did in the '20s and '30s when James E. Strates started out. Technology and thrill rides have replaced the menageries and "freak shows" of the past. But there are still some things that remain the same. Jay Strates' grandfather's and father's ambition, optimism, innovation and love of the industry are certainly still strongly evidenced in the family's promise to keep James E. Strates Shows on the road (and the rails) for years to come.

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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

► News Splash — page 34 / Breaking news at AmusementToday.com!

Wavegarden delivers a world-class surf park to South Korea

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

SIHEUNG-SI, South Korea — Since its founding in 2005, Spanish company **Wavegarden SL** has strived to create a perfect surfing wave experience for everyone, everywhere. With four commercial surfing facilities already up and running, another four set to open this year, plus another 30 or so in development, the company's aspiration to this goal is materializing.

In October 2020, **Siheung Surf Park**, Asia's largest wave park, opened in the Turtle Island development in Siheung-si, South Korea. The massive project is reported to cost 2.49 trillion South Korean Won (US\$2.3 billion). Located just an hour's drive from Seoul in the South Korean province of Gyeonggi, Turtle Island was constructed on land reclaimed from the ocean. The resort's objective is to become a new international waterfront destination with plans for six hotels, a convention center, museum and marina, all surrounding the park centerpiece — an inland sea of multiple pools that includes Wavegarden's largest surfing lagoon to date. Fronting the inland sea is nearly one kilometer of sandy beach.

Once the resort is fully operational, developer **Daewon Plus Construction** is hoping to attract two million visitors each year. Approximately 10.8 million tourists visit the region annually.

COVID-19 restrictions currently limit the number of guests permitted in the facility at any one time, and those traveling to South Korea must quarantine for 14 days. However, that did not stop several Wavegarden technicians and world-class surfers who bit the bullet and headed to South Korea to test out the company's latest creation. They were joined by **Sungyong Ko**, one of Korea's most famous surfers, who was there for the



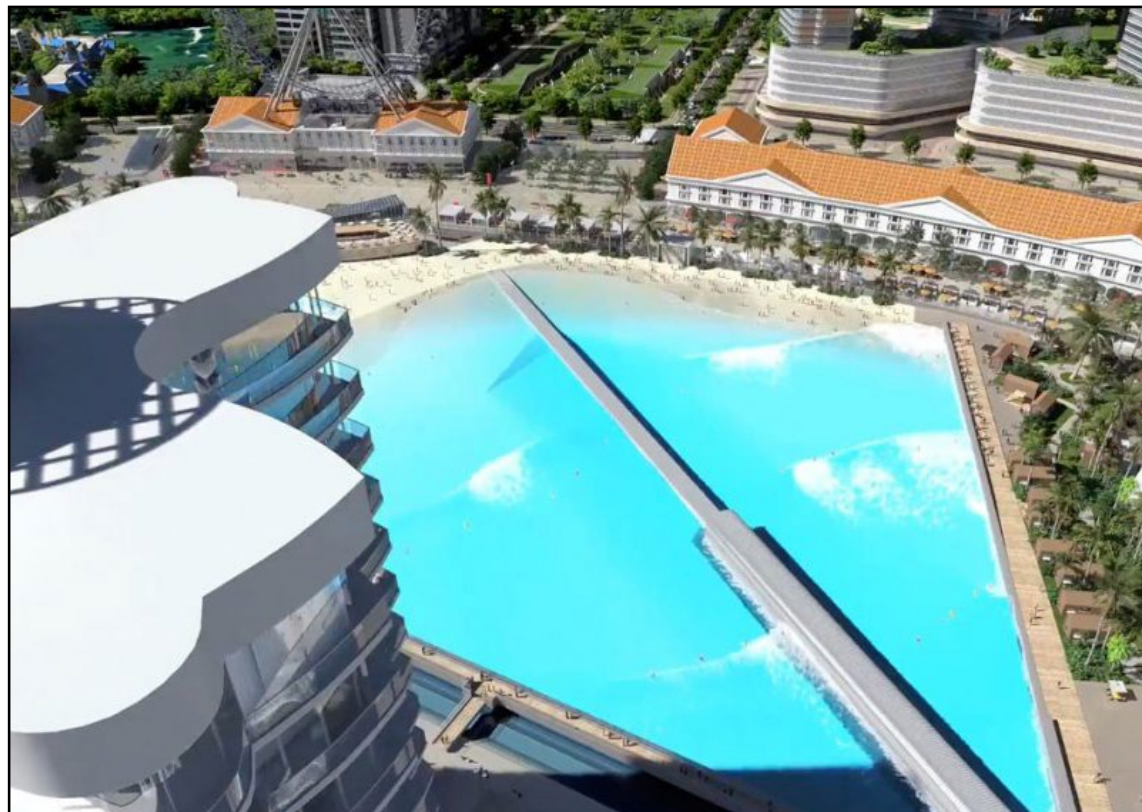
This artist's rendition of the completed project (above) shows the massive scale and illustrates how the Wavegarden lagoons and pools form an inland sea serving as the centerpiece of the development. This aerial view (below) shows how the lagoon is divided, offering different skill levels or styles of waves on each side. COURTESY WAVEGARDEN

grand opening.

New technology means the South Korean site can offer longer waves and barrels and a wider variety of waves than any other surf park. This newest project offers more than 20 different wave types ranging from small knee-high beginner waves to long, steep barrels. New to the wave menu is a world-class air section that allows expert surfers to perform aerial tricks and maneuvers.

"I have surfed every credible wave park in the world, and this was my best surf experience," said **Jacob Szekely**, World Surf League Airbourne surfer. "The clear water and the wide variety of awesome open face and barrel waves is incredible. However, the new air section is simply insane. On the first day of testing, I landed the best aerial of my life."

Josema Odrizola, founder and CEO of Wavegarden said: "We are delighted to bring the incredible sport of surfing and beach lifestyle to South Korea. With consistent waves of different sizes and shapes, Wave Park is going to be the



new beach of Seoul and the place to surf for families, professional surfers, and everyone in between."

Similar to a recent project in Australia, the South Korean lagoon is divided into two halves, each capable of producing different types of waves at the same time. Beginners can learn how to surf with gentle waves in

one half of the pool while experts can hone their skills with larger waves in the other half.

Adjacent to the wave park lagoon are coves and pools for other aquatic activities such as kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) and swimming in zones with or without waves. The wave pool zone for swimming

will utilize Boogie Wave Machine equipment provided by **Murphy's Waves** of Glasgow, England.

Wavegarden's noise-free wave-generating technology can generate up to 1,000 waves per hour depending on the wave setting and operational requirements.

► See WAVE, page 34

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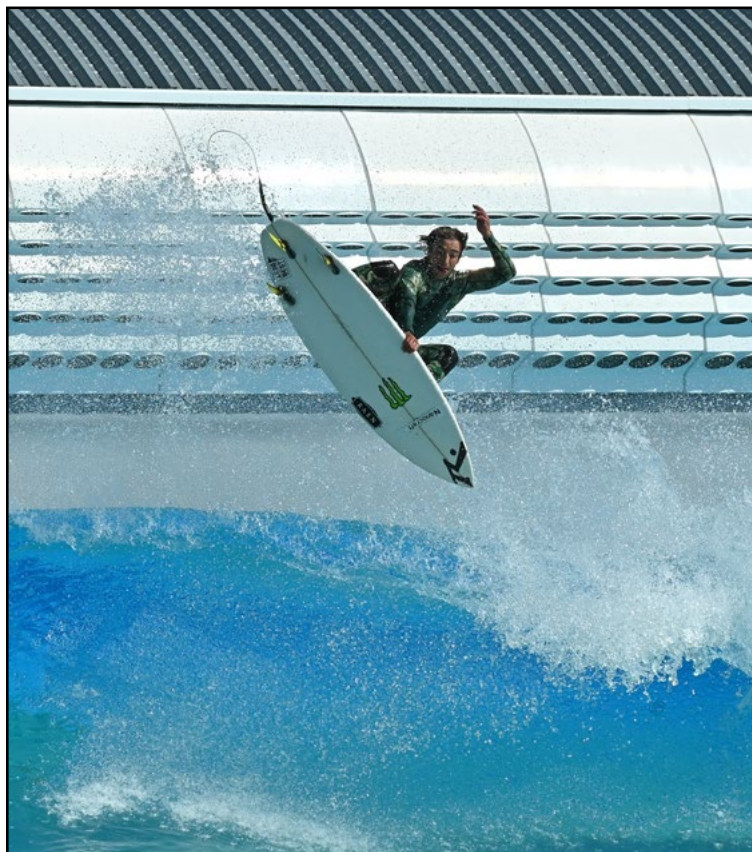
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World Surf Leagues' Jacob Szekely demonstrates how to catch air from one of the new world-class-air waves that the park is able to offer. COURTESY WAVEGARDEN

►WAVE Continued from page 32

The machinery is capable of running in non-stop mode and can produce sets of waves of almost any desired quantity. This high frequency of quality waves ensures there's plenty for everyone without the need to compete with fellow surfers.

Wavegarden is also focused on economic and environmental sustainability. Despite the massive size of the installations, studies reveal that Wavegarden's technology consumes less energy than the popular pneumatic wave generation equipment typically used for wave pools. The mechanical system employed by the Wavegarden Cove requires less than one kilowatt-hour per wave — very little energy is lost in the transmission of forces and part of the energy is recovered and reused. Snow-plow-like "wavefoils" move back and forth on underwater tracks, generating ocean-like waves. As the waves reach the end of the pool, some of the energy generated by those waves is recovered in order to minimize electricity use and to help power the water treatment system.

To keep the water crystal clear and hygienically safe, each Wavegarden Cove is supplied with its own state-of-the-art water treatment

system. Designed specifically for wave lagoons, the system is based on a series of sustainable treatments including fine filtration, ozone and UV disinfection, and low chemical chlorination.

Over the past 15 years, Wavegarden's development team has grown to more than 60 full-time staff members. The firm consists of engineers, architects, computer science and fluid dynamic experts along with water treatment specialists and those responsible for business development and operations. The company headquarters near San Sebastian, Spain, has its own Wavegarden demo and testing pool.

"In recent years, we have mastered all aspects of our technology, including an innovative water treatment system, and expanded our business development services to provide clients with a seamless experience from project concept through to opening and beyond," explained Odriozola. "Today, we can even go one step further by providing expert assistance across all aspects of commercial operations."

The company's first installation, **Surf Snowdonia** in Dalgargog, North Wales, opened in 2015. That was followed a year later by **NLand Surf Park** in Austin, Texas. More recent openings include facilities in England and Australia.



NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

The city of Marathon, which spans multiple islands in the Florida Keys, may be in line for a new splash park. The city council is considering proposals for a splash park with several water features, pavilions, space for tables and lounge chairs, and a small building to house an attendant and lockers. The location in **Marathon Community Park** would be adjacent to an existing wooden skate park that, under the same proposal, would be rebuilt.

"The skatepark is used by a lot of kids. Any evening there are about 20 kids using it," said **Chuck Lindsey**, outgoing city manager.

"What I recommend is moving it to the other side of the parking lot and constructing it out of concrete instead of wood. Every year, for as long as I can remember, we've had to allocate funds to make the improvements to that park. It's a daily chore and the repairs only last so long," added Lindsey.

The next step in the project is for the city to put the projects out to bid. It was decided that for bidding purposes, the projects would be bid out separately.

"I would hire separate designers for each side of the project, though. I don't think you want a skatepark designer to design a splash pad or vice versa," said Lindsey.

Alabama's **Water World** in Dothan, is gearing up for an expansion in 2021. The Dothan City Commission approved the addition of an aquatic play structure to the existing kids cove pool. The existing pool was constructed to accommodate a play structure in the future so the aquatics manager is excited that the city commission approved the purchase and the park can proceed with the process of getting it installed. Four new slides were installed last year for the 2020 season but after a COVID-19-filled summer, the slides saw hardly any use.

The park is looking forward to visitors taking full advantage of the new slides and the new water play structure this coming year.

Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa located in New Zealand in the town that bears the same name, has opened a new water playground called Aquaplay. The area was due for completion earlier this year, but its opening was hampered by the global pandemic, with the slides stuck overseas for months.

General manager **Graeme Abbot** said the new Aquaplay area will add to the fun features of the business and will make the complex even more appealing to visitors.

The brand new Aquaplay structure sits to the side of the children's pool and offers three slides. It is designed to accommodate children five years of age and younger.

"We are really looking forward to sharing the new Aquaplay space with all those who visit this summer," said Abbot.

The Hanmer Springs hot pools were purchased in 1960 by the local community and gifted to the city council. As tourism increased, additional pools were built in 1978, 1992 and 1999. In 2009 a waterslide was

added to the fresh water pool and eventually that was expanded into a full-fledged water park. The city itself has a small population of 840 residents but that swells during the holiday season with the city attracting more than 520,000 guests each year.

A new pool complex and small water park in Pierre, South Dakota, is planning to start construction this spring after bids are reviewed earlier in the year. Plans of the nearly \$13 million project include a bathhouse and snack bar along with shallow water pool, a multi-purpose pool that can double as a competition pool, lazy river, play structure, speed slide, drop slide, raft slide, kiddie slide and zip line.

The city of Pierre has contributed \$10 million to the new pool complex and the community raised another \$2.1 million. The **Walt Disney Company** donated \$40,000 through its National Parks and Recreation Grant Program.

Pierre recreation superintendent and grant application writer **Mindy Cheap** said the city is very fortunate to receive such a grant.

"They only provided 12 of these grants nationwide," Cheap said. "I think their support of the project validates the importance of having a safe, fun, and usable outdoor public pool."

The city is hopeful that the remaining \$844,000 will be raised in time and nothing will have to be cut from the current proposal.

ProSlide Technology Inc. has secured design patent protection for its RallyRacer water slide. The head-first mat racer utilizes enclosed tubes that open up into rally points. The unique aspect of the RallyRacer is that the open channels have rounded sides which allows mat sliders to enter additional enclosed sections without fear of hitting the side of the tube. ProSlide RallyRacers can provide multiple enclosed and rally (open) sections along the slide.

Proslide also has a patent pending for its Dueling PipeLineBlast uphill water coaster. This racing and dueling water coaster features flat and uphill RallyPoints using water jets to propel rafts of two to four riders along the course. The first Dueling PipeLineBlast water coaster opened earlier this year as Cheetah Chase at **Holiday World & Splashin' Safari** in Santa Claus, Indiana.

Epic Waters, the award-winning indoor water park in Grand Prairie, Texas, is available for rent for private parties. Families or groups of up to 100 can book the park for a two-hour rental outside of normal operating hours.

The package, called My Park, My Waves, starts at \$1,900 and can be customized to include different attractions, along with food options if desired.

Epic Waters is the largest indoor water park under a single retractable roof in the U.S. The rental package is designed to provide an exclusive water park experience for family groups or social groups of friends at an affordable price.

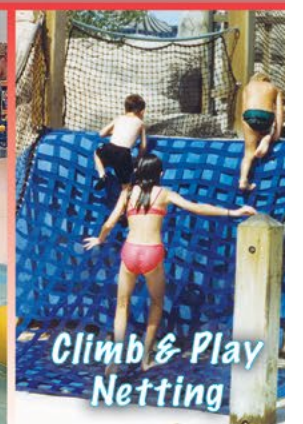
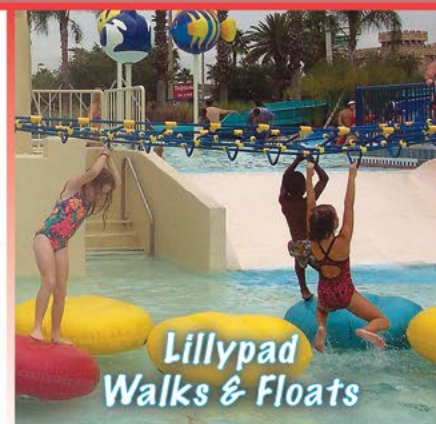


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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► **Women of Influence: Laura Woodburn Krolczyk — page 38 / Business Watch — page 39**

The 2021 IAFE Virtual Vision deemed a success by all involved

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — For two days, November 30 and December 1, 450 members of the **International Association of Fairs & Expositions (IAFE)** participated in Virtual Vision, an online learning and networking experience that covered all aspects of fair operation, marketing, management and more. Total participation included 2,017 engagements in 32 different workshops and events. There were attendees from the United States, Canada and Australia.

"It was an epic two-day educational extravaganza," said **Jill Albanese**, director of competitive exhibits, **Wisconsin State Fair**, who headed the program committee.

Using the **CrowdCompass** online platform, a total of 28 educational sessions, a keynote speaker presentation, two morning kick-off sessions, two showcasing luncheons and two evening happy hour showcasing events were provided. Also, nearly three dozen pre-recorded, on-demand short sessions called PowerTalks and Champions Circle presentations were launched. There were 58 exhibitors featured in Marketplace, an opportunity where associate members connected with buyers of their services and products.

The top presentations included "The Art of Perception," by **Amy Herman**, keynote speaker; Case Study: Fairs That Went Ahead; The Power of the Question "How Do We Do This Differently?"; Building a Lasting Business in Uncertain Times and Generation Z In-Sight.

All Virtual Vision sessions were recorded and available



Jill Albanese

to registered participants through the end of last year.

"The world is upside down right now and to go into the future, fairs will play a critical role because of the vital function they play in bringing people together," said Herman, keynote speaker. "To do that it will be necessary to think differently about what you do every day. It will be critical to convert observable details into actionable insights. And it is important to understand that change is a positive force. Even small and incremental change can have monumental and immeasurable impact." Herman a lawyer and art historian, uses works of art to sharpen observation and perception skills as well as refine communication of vision, mission, and strategy."

IAFE maintains Virtual Vision was not the 2020 IAFE Convention and Trade Show and that there was no intent to try to replicate that. This was a totally separate and different educational experience and event. And, as 2020 IAFE Chair **Nancy Smith**, general manager at the **South Carolina State Fair**, put it, it was "an historic and epic event."

"Someone in my office had a strange look on their face and said, 'I'm just wondering how



Amy Herman

in the world and what had to happen for the IAFE to be able to have something so great to give us?" I think that pretty much sums it up," stated Smith.

Of course, social events took place both evenings as IAFE President and CEO **Marla Calico** explained: "Happy hour was a blast! It was hosted by **Dennis Friebe**, of **Kardenni Entertainment**. Dennis is serving a two-year term representing associate members on the YPI Steering Committee (our young professionals leadership team). He kept things lively! We livestreamed different recordings of showcase acts and attendees could chat with one another throughout. Between acts, all attendees were assigned to **Zoom** breakout rooms based upon their job title. There were two different breakout sessions."

To meet the annual requirement of IAFE by-laws, 11 separate business meetings for zones and other constituencies were held virtually between November 12 and December 2. The annual business meeting was held online, December 8, with directors and directors at large announced, along with a few officer positions were completed. Calico also presented her state of the industry remarks at that meet-



Nancy Smith

ing.

Some unsolicited comments about Virtual Vision included: "Crazy impressed on how smooth this virtual thing went! So organized and professional," said **Rachel Lisk** of the **Lewis County Agricultural Society**, Lowville, N.Y.

"Virtual Vision was tremendous. The sessions I attended were great and the technology worked very well (as well as technology can anyway). The content of the sessions ranks up there with the best from any IAFE Convention I've attended," said **Ray Allison**, **Indiana State Fair**.

"I'm so glad I was a part of the IAFE Virtual Vision," said marketplace exhibitor **Pam Schultz**, **IG Presents**.

"Virtual Vision was 'Red Bull' for my soul. I came away with energy and excitement for great things to come," stated **Drew Tewksbury**, **McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance**, one of the sponsors.

Calico reflected on this first-ever event for IAFE. "What is that old saying, 'When life hands you lemons, make lemonade?' That is what Jill Albanese and Nancy Smith helped our IAFE team to do. It was their enthusiastic approach to getting together virtually that made this success. Further, all



Marla Calico

the kudos for utilizing the technology to create an engaging and educational online event goes to the terrific team here at IAFE. **Kate Turner**, director of meetings along with **Steve Siever**, director of sales and **Lori Hart**, director of education and member services took the lead on developing the concept and outlining our plan."

"It took every single person on this team being willing to work in new 'territory' to make this a success. Everyone really stepped up to learn new skills (we now have a TEAM of Zoom specialists!). Finally, we had two remote volunteers on our technology team – **Amy Listle** of the **Jefferson County Fair** in Wisconsin, and **Jayne Buttke**, executive director of the **Wisconsin Association of Fairs**. These ladies each took a role as a co-organizer for our Zoom teams so that we had bandwidth redundancy throughout, as well as utilizing the skills they built up using Zoom for Wisconsin Association of Fairs meetings held regular once COVID hit."

The 2021 IAFE Convention and Trade Show is slated to be held in San Antonio, November 28 to December 1 at the **Henry B. González Convention Center**.

• fairsandexpos.com



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The Showmen's League of America holds annual meeting online

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

CHICAGO, Ill. — The **Showmen's League of America** held its annual meeting for the first time online as a result of the ongoing pandemic. The late-November event had 60 attendees. Here are some of the highlights of the Zoom gathering.

The meeting was called to order by President **Mary Chris Smith** with a moment of silence for **Father John Vakulskas**, SLA chaplain who recently passed. Smith then read the mission statement and gave a toast with those on the call saying, "I would like to toast all of us in these strange times."

Gold Cards and member longevity pins were sent to the following people:

25-year members: **Eric Bates** (Bates Amusements/A.R.M. USA); **Joe Clair** (Clair's Classic Foods/Luehrs' Ideal Rides); **Harry Mason**



(Brass Ring Amusement's Midway of Fun); **Guy McDaniel** (independent ride owner - books with RCS) and **Thomas Talley** (Talley Amusements)/

50-year members: **Donald Massie** (retired from Alpine Amusements); **Robert Merten** (retired - used to own B&B Rides), **Richard Normant** (Normant Candy Company), **Anthony Salerno** (Windy City Amusements), **Fred Vonderheid** (retired), and **Frank Zaitshik** (Wade Shows).

The building committee reported a new HVAC system was installed over two fiscal years (2019/2020). Roof and skylight leaks were addressed and sealed along with a new vinyl wind door installed for a total expenditure of \$68,000.

The scholarship committee reported at their February 2020 meeting in Tampa, they

awarded \$89,000 in scholarships. This included 51 students plus a donation to the **St. Louis SLA** and two carnival schools (**Deggeller Attractions** and **RCS**).

President Smith accepted six nominees for the nominating committee which were approved unanimously. They include **Heidi Pugh**, **Annie Shugart**, **Bob Hauser**, **Trampas Porter**, **Corrie Jamieson**, and **Andy Schoendienst**, alternate. The committee will be meeting next month.

Before the new officers were installed, Smith shared a few thoughts with the group assembled. "I know how difficult this year has been. Carnival people are resilient and passionate. Our industry creates a new city sometimes on a weekly basis. Everyone loves what they do, and I truly believe you are all the finest showmen in the world. Everyone will be remembered in 2020 for trying to operate and salvage their businesses. With just more patience, I really think [in] 2021 everyone is going to prevail, and it will be a much

better time in our lives."

Schoendienst installed the 2021 officers and board members. This is normally executed by the chaplain. A new one has not been selected to fill the position previously held by **Father Vakulskas**.



Thorson

President Smith presented incoming President **Robert Thorson** (Fantasy Amusements) with his gavel. The newly installed president then presented Mary Chris with her gold card and plaque. He thanked her for her service. Thorson mentioned the 2021 theme is "The Show Must Go On."

Other 2021 SLA officers include: 1st Vice President **Patrick Jamieson** (World's Finest Shows); 2nd Vice President **Marc Janas** (B. Original Foods) and 3rd Vice President **Bob Johnson** (retired OABA president). The treasurer is **John Hanschen**, (Thomas Carnival, Inc.)

Secretary / Executive Director **Cindy Henning**

was asked about the new format for the annual meeting. "Although it takes some getting used to, we were excited to see everyone's faces after a long year. For those members who are typically unable to travel to our annual meeting, Zoom calls have become a great opportunity for them to be included and participate. We plan on using them for general member meetings going forward."



Henning

The Showmen's League of America was founded in 1913 by a group of outdoor showmen meeting at the **Saratoga Hotel** in Chicago. **Buffalo Bill Cody**, the Wild West performer, was elected the club's first president. The mission of the SLA is to promote friendship and fellowship between its members and the outdoor amusement industry and pledge to assist those in need through one of their many programs.

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Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

Laura Woodburn Krolczyk began working at **Hersheypark**, Hershey, Pennsylvania, when she was only 15 years old. She worked there part time throughout her high school and college years, and continued full-time after college graduation.

She has held various roles at the park and has been part of its growth. She also has been very active within the industry.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- Member, served on board, and was a spokesperson from 2012-2017, National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO)
- Awarded Person of the Year, 2013, for contribution to NAARSO's first Ride Operations Certification program
- Appointed to Board of Directors and serves as Global Education Committee Chair, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)
- Formerly served as IAAPA Facility Operations Committee Chair
- Received IAAPA's Outstanding Service Award in 2016

It's a sweet industry for Krolczyk

HERSHEY, Pa. — Laura Woodburn Krolczyk was a local Hershey, Pennsylvania, girl. And like many of the young people attending Hershey High School, Krolczyk found a part-time job at a local business, Hershey Entertainment and Resorts. She started at Hersheypark when she was a freshman, just 15 years old.

She began as a sweeper.

"I swept the park," Krolczyk said. "And I cleaned the restrooms."

"As a freshman at Hershey High School, I could never have guessed that this summer job would turn into the career of a lifetime," she said.

She loved the work, though. She loved working outside and meeting people.

Krolczyk continued her part-time employment at Hersheypark all the way through high school and college. She became a ride operator her second season, and for the next seven years was able to work up through various supervisory positions in that department.

Krolczyk had decided to attend a local college, Kutztown University. She graduated with a degree in Communications and minors in Psychology and Public Relations.

"My dream was to become a news anchor or so I thought, as I have always been a huge fan of the news," Krolczyk said. "One of my guilty pleasures is reading the newspaper and, yes, an actual newspaper!"

But shortly after college graduation, she began to feel the pull of the amusement industry. She already had worked enough time for the industry to have gotten into

her blood.

"And based on my experience at Hersheypark, I decided that it was the place for me," Krolczyk said. "I was hired full time at Hersheypark as the senior supervisor of guest services."

Over the next several years, Krolczyk said she felt fortunate to have been able to serve in many different roles not only in guest services, but also attractions operations and entertainment. She ultimately served in leadership positions in those areas.

"I pulled from all my previous experience for my current role as the assistant general manager," she said.

When asked for what accomplishments within the industry she is most proud, Krolczyk said there are primarily two things that have driven her passion.

"The first has been helping others to develop and grow, coaching where needed and helping teams be the very best they can be," she said. "I am so proud of those that I have watched rise through the part-time ranks to that of full time employees and managers."

To know that perhaps she may have made a difference to them, makes her proud.

"The second is a more personal goal of helping to develop programs and educate our teams on providing services for guests with disabilities," Krolczyk said.

In October 2016, Hershey was honored to host the first annual IAAPA Operators Forum. The forum was held at Hershey Lodge and featured an immersive, educational experience focused on helping

Laura Woodburn Krolczyk

Assistant General Manager
Hersheypark
Hershey, Pennsylvania



others in the amusement industry to develop programs to better assist their guests with disabilities.

"The day-and-a-half forum brought in more than 60 participants and was completely sold out," she said. "It was such a pleasure to welcome those from other amusement parks, science centers, museums, zoos, entertainment centers and aquariums from across the United States."

Krolczyk said she is the first in her family to work in the amusement industry, although the idea of service runs very deep.

"I come from a long line of relatives that have volunteered extensively in their community as firefighters, paramedics and EMTs," she said. "Learning this sense of service from my family, I try to give back through volunteerism to the amusement industry."

Krolczyk said she truly loves all aspects of hospitality and guest service.

"Guests come from all across the country for the hope and promise of a safe and enjoyable experience and they part with their hard earned money to do it," she said. "It's both

a thrill and an obligation to meet the expectations our guests have for a visit to Hershey. The sense of pride our team has when we know that our guests were able to put the cares of the world behind them for a few hours and really connect and have fun while visiting Hersheypark is pretty amazing."

"Hands down the best part of my job is watching people having fun and creating family memories," Krolczyk said. "How special and amazing is it that we are responsible for helping people to have great vacations, sharing time together."

Krolczyk said she counts herself fortunate to be working in such a vibrant industry that welcomes women. She also is glad to see so many women not only involved in the industry, but working in areas of leadership.

"I still feel deeply the excitement of providing happiness and joy to families, and I see more and more women drawn to the same desire to make a difference in the lives of people. You literally see the value you provided on the faces of our guests. That is a draw that our industry has that is hard to beat."

—Pam Sherborne

MARKET WATCH

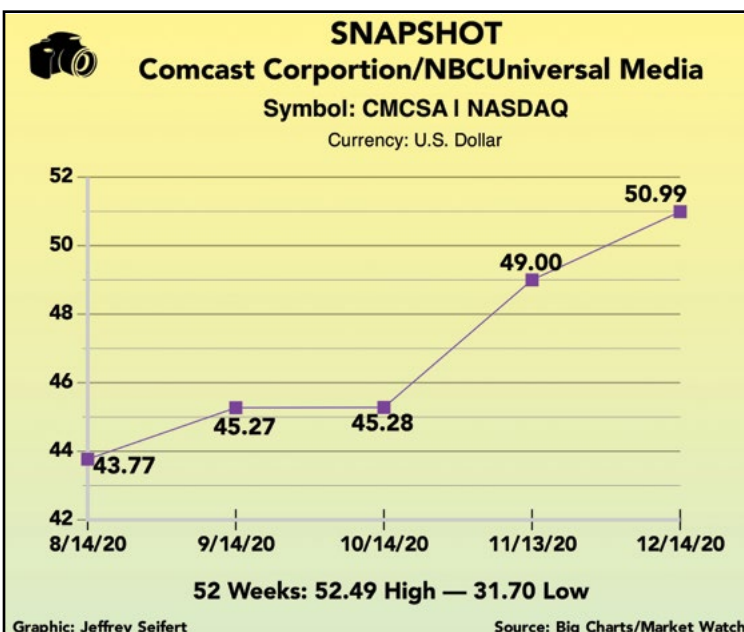
COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 12/16/20	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	64.93	65.69	33.00
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	38.20	56.70	13.00
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	51.43	52.49	31.70
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	173.12	179.45	79.07
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.12	0.21	0.09
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	33.64	73.59	12.55
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	4545.00	5450.00	2080.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	0.50	1.09	0.38
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	21.75	23.05	9.08
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	30.98	34.63	5.90
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	73.65	135.31	19.25
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	617.00	930.00	490.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	29.11	36.96	6.75
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	32.87	46.67	8.75
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	698.00	788.00	550.00
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL	ASX	3.00	4.10	0.77

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: **ASX**, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; **SZSE**, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; **TSEC**, Taiwan Stock Exchange, Corp.; **TYO/TSE**, Tokyo Stock Exchange

—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal

Universal Studios Japan announced the all-new Super Nintendo World will debut on February 4, 2021. The themed area will feature the interactive Mario Kart: Koopa's Challenge. COURTESY UNIVERSAL STUDIOS JAPAN

**DIESEL PRICES**

Region (U.S.)	As of 12/14/20	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.603	-\$0.450
Midwest	\$2.478	-\$0.492
Gulf Coast	\$2.307	-\$0.456
Mountain	\$2.556	-\$0.605
West Coast	\$2.751	-\$0.529
California	\$3.342	-\$0.540

CURRENCY

On 12/16/20 \$1 USD =

0.8228	EURO
0.7475	GBP (British Pound)
103.89	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.8862	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.3265	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2738	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH**WhiteWater celebrates 40 years of success**

VANCOUVER, B.C. — **WhiteWater**, a leading global designer and manufacturer of water park products and active family attractions, announced on December 15 that it is has begun a year-long celebration to commemorate its 40th anniversary. WhiteWater was founded in 1980 with one clear purpose, to create places where families unite to make joyful lasting memories. Now, 40 years later, they are one of the world's largest providers of everything a water park needs, from park design to the broadest range of attractions in the industry.

"Four decades later and WhiteWater is a designer and manufacturer of over 100 incredible attractions, which can be found in thousands of parks all over the world," stated **Geoff Chutter**, WhiteWater's founder and CEO. "Even after all this time, the motivation remains the same, I've always wanted to see families have safe, healthy fun together, and alongside with our clients, we continue to achieve that."

"WhiteWater's success is thanks to the hugely talented people we've assembled," added **Paul Chutter**, WhiteWater's chief business development officer and son of Geoff Chutter. "I'm so proud to be part of a team I believe to be the very best in the industry and I can honestly say we're unstoppable. It is in thanks and recognition we celebrate our 40th anniversary." Paul concluded.

Pandemic continues impact on Dave & Buster's

DALLAS — **Dave & Buster's Entertainment, Inc.**'s third quarter 2020 financial results continued to be severely impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic when compared against results of the third quarter of 2019. The Company began the third quarter with 84 open stores, or approximately 60 percent of its total store base. As of November 1, the Company had 104 open stores, or approximately 75 percent of its total store base. All stores open during the quarter operated under reduced hours and capacity limitations as dictated by each jurisdiction.

"During the third quarter we made significant progress safely reopening stores while refining and implementing numerous initiatives that are accelerating our business recovery and positioning us for long-term success," stated **Brian Jenkins**, Dave & Buster's CEO. "Our sales recovery at reopened stores peaked in late October at a 68% index compared to last year, with the top quartile of stores reaching a 91% index. Combined with the team's continued discipline around our lean operating model, we achieved positive store-level EBITDA at 68 stores in the third quarter and 80 stores in the month of October."

Total revenues of \$109.1 million declined 63.6% from \$299.4 million. Comparable store sales declined 66% for the third quarter. By month, comparable store sales were down 75% in August, down 62% percent in September and down 59% in October. Non-comparable store third-quarter revenue totaled \$20.1 million compared with \$40.1 million.

Takeover of Village Roadshow approved

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — An Australian federal court gave its approval on December 15 for a takeover of **Village Roadshow Limited** by private investors after a year-long battle that saw the company's value roller coaster throughout.

The company's status has been in the wind for several years due to bitter feuding between the controlling **Kirby** family and its allies, and at the beginning of 2020 its shares stood at half their 2014 valuation.

Village Roadshow Limited is operator of the **Village Roadshow** cinema chain, with 57 cinemas and 577 screens, and owner of film distributor, **Roadshow Distribution**. It is also one of the country's largest operators of theme parks, including Queensland-based **Sea World**, and the **Warner Bros. Movie World** that is linked to the Warner film studios.

Following the court approval, share trading will ended on Wednesday, December 16. The takeover was expected to be completed by December 29.

ON THE MOVE

SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. announced its Board of Directors have elected **Timothy Hartnett** and **Kimberly Schaefer** to serve as Directors of the Company, effective December 9, 2020. These appointments increase the size of the Board from eight to ten Directors.

"We are pleased to welcome Tim and Kim to the Company's Board," said **Scott Ross**, chairman of the SeaWorld board and managing partner of **Hill Path Capital**. "Tim brings significant experience working with companies across industry sectors and brings unique skills, particularly in finance and accounting. Kim has significant experience in the leisure, hospitality and entertainment sectors and brings unique skills, particularly in operations and marketing. We are very fortunate to have Tim and Kim on our Board and look forward to their contributions."

Hartnett is currently CEO of **New Roc Management**, a consulting firm focused on providing asset management and operational services and advice to a high net worth family. From 1988 to 2013 he was employed by **PricewaterhouseCoopers** where he ultimately served as a partner and global leader of its private equity practice.

Schaefer is president of **Two Bit Circus, Inc.**, a startup concept focusing on social interactions using the latest in technology and gaming. From 2009 to 2015, Schaefer served as CEO and a Director of **Great Wolf Resorts, Inc.**, and prior to that, as Chief Operating Officer/Chief Brand Officer. Schaefer serves on the Board of Directors of **Hall of Fame Resort & Entertainment**



Hartnett



Schaefer

Company and served on the Board of Education Realty Trust from 2016 to 2018.

DOF Robotics a producer of dynamic simulation platforms, is welcoming a new Chief Commercial Officer to the team.

The company has announced the appointment of **Ahmet Enes Aladas** to the role. In his new position, he will be responsible for augmenting DOF's existing client coverage and expanding its overall client base and global market share.

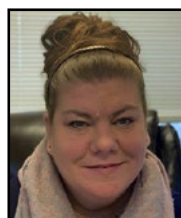
The appointment of Ahmet Enes Aladas will improve the company's international sales and marketing strategies and DOF Robotics is looking forward to bringing many more innovations to the amusement and robotics industries in the years to come.

The American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF) Board of Directors has appointed **Tina Schwartz**, AAMA's Business & Finance Manager, as the Foundation's new Executive Director. In addition to this new position, Schwartz will continue to serve as the Business and Finance Manager for AAMA.

Tina first joined the AAMCF team in 1999 when she took on the role of Administrative and Finance Assistant for AAMA. Over her more than 21 years of service, she has grown in her roles and responsibilities within both organizations, serving as the Business and Finance Manager for more than 15 years. She has a deep dedication to the industry and the AAMCF charity partners.



Aladas



Schwartz

OBITUARIES

Boardwalk's Leo Whalen, Lucky Leo's founder

SEASIDE HEIGHTS, N.J. — Leo Whalen, who was a boardwalk institution as much as Lucky Leo's Amusements, the arcade he owned in Seaside Heights, has died. He was 94.

Before opening Lucky Leo's in 1975 in Seaside Heights, Whelan ran a boardwalk wheel and various stands. He balanced his career in games with another in the classroom, working as an elementary school and junior high school teacher in Bayville and Seaside Park. Whalen opened his first amusement stand in Seaside Heights in 1953. Then, the wheel cost a nickel a space (or six spaces for a quarter).

Though Whelan retired from running the arcade in 1986 and his sons Steve and Tom and his grandchildren took over operations, he was a regular presence at the business, which started out with pinball machines and offered slot machines, Skee-Ball, crane games and video poker.



Whalen

Century Vending owner, Jerry Monday

DALLAS — Jerry Monday passed December 2 due to complications with COVID-19. One of the most colorful personalities in the coin machine business, Monday was just a few weeks shy of this 86th birthday.

His lengthy amusement industry resumé includes years as a route operator (starting in 1960 with Tulsa, Oklahoma's Century Games) and an arcade operator (including a game room at Knott's Berry Farm). He also either owned or worked for distributorships such as Southgate and SunBelt in Texas, Betson West, Circle International and his own Century Vending. His resumé also included time working for manufacturers like Nintendo, Leisure Sports and his Century game brand.

"He lived a great life and lived it on his terms," said his ex-wife Sue Monday. "He made some enemies, but many more great friends along the way. He was a character!"



Monday

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SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► Suppliers starting to see the light — page 46 / GOSA postpones Midwest safety conference — page 50

Park winterization continues to be a process, even under COVID

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Matt Stevens, director of maintenance, **Silverwood Theme Park**, Athol, Idaho, can't really think of anything new that has come out over the years to make winterization of his park any easier.

It just is what it is.

"It is quite the process," Stevens said. "We start it the day after we close the park for the season. And we are going all winter long."

It is pretty much the same process across the board for many parks, but all with different twists and tweaks. For example, Stevens said the roller coaster off-season maintenance is their most labor intensive. Their biggest challenges are getting parts if those parts are coming from overseas.

At **Quassy Amusement Park**, Middlebury, Connecticut, **Eric Anderson**, park president, said one of their unique challenges is making sure all water lines and pipes are drained. "We are an older facility, 113 years old," Anderson said. "A lot of our plumbing wasn't really made for people to be here in the winter. The pipes are shallow so they are easier to freeze."

For **Big Kahuna's Water and Adventure Park** in Destin, Florida, one of the biggest challenges there is really just about the same thing that makes the park popular, salty ocean air.

Brandon Moore, regional operations director, **Boomer Parks**, said Big Kahuna's Park is located about one mile from the ocean.

But for Stevens at Silverwood, it is the snow and cold

temperatures they have to deal with.

"We have about five to seven people that work on the tracks on our wooden roller coasters all year long," he said. "This time of year, we are replacing some of the wooden tracks. They will do this in the winter even while it is snowing."

If a snow storm is in the forecast, they can wrap certain areas with plastic. Then, the plastic sheets can just be pulled off. It will still be cold, but the work areas will be free of ice and snow.

"It will get pretty slippery at times," Stevens said. "But our guys have protective gear. They have boots to prevent slipping and they are tied off."

Silverwood has an extensive

on-site maintenance program. There is a year-round maintenance crew of about 35 people. There is a separate workshop for the coasters and one for the flat rides. There is a welding shop, a paint shop, a machine shop and carpentry shop.

"Having this all here, on-site is helpful," Stevens said. "We begin dismantling every ride right after we close for the season. We go through every tub and all the components. We pretty much rebuild every ride every year."

Replacing parts can be challenging.

"It has taken up to 15 months for one part to come in," he said. "For those, we do keep spares. If we use the one we have on hand, we reorder it immediately."

Some of the rides come with cages or stands where the tubs are placed for maintenance. Some don't so they have had to improvise. For example, they made rolling carts on which to place each roller coaster train. The carts have definitely helped with any damage that could occur during moving the trains and in maintenance.

"It would be nice if supply companies would make some type of cart or stand to come with each of their rides," Stevens said. "This would be especially nice for rides that we have to handle a lot, which is pretty much all of them."

Stevens has been with Silverwood for seven seasons now. He came to Silverwood from a different industry, but

with construction knowledge in parks and aquariums.

He also has family in the industry. His cousin, **Fred Grubb**, is the founder of **Rocky Mountains Construction (RMC)**.

"I learned a lot just by being around them," he said.

At Quassy, Anderson said they also tear down each and every ride. They are able to keep water running in two of the office buildings and the park's maintenance shop during the cold winter.

They begin at the close of each season. Since the water park closes before the dry park, they can get started on the attractions there. They drain everything.

► See WINTER, page 43



Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, is located right at the foot of the Smoky Mountains. Temperatures get very cold. Winterization there starts early. COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

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PICTURED: THE DRAGON, OCEAN PARK HONG KONG

►WINTER

Continued from page 42

"We also have some water race games that have to be completely drained," he said.

The extensive maintenance workshop allows them to do most of the work in-house.

The winterization checklist at **Dollywood**, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, includes: ensuring all water features and lines are freeze resistant and have been cleared of all liquids; ensure all HVACs are cleaned, serviced and converted to heat; ensure all portable heaters are distributed throughout Dollywood as needed for both hosts and guests; ensure salt or brine spreading equipment is serviced and that the park has an ample supply for winter and ensure attractions are configured for winter operation.

"Dollywood is located in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains," said **Daniel Foulks**, vice president of maintenance. "Our theme park operates from mid-March through the first week of January, so we have to prepare for the winter months while we

are open."

Typically, the park closes between the Harvest and Smoky Mountain Christmas festivals, which gives the maintenance crew about a six-day window around the first week of November to make many of the big changes. This also is when they often see the weather begin to change.

"During this time, we focus on adjusting attractions for operation in lower temperatures," Foulks said. "Many coasters have both summer and winter configurations that we follow as the temperature fluctuates throughout our operating season. These changes can include different wheel configurations, oil weight changes and even pre-warming prior to park opening each day."

Before they even hit November, they go ahead and close attractions and facilities that do not operate in the winter. Dollywood has a few water rides and play areas that are taken offline in October due to the colder nightly temperatures. Water lines need to be completely clear of any liquids.

► See **WINTER**, page 44



The maintenance crew at Quassy Amusement Park, Middlebury, Connecticut, did a total revamp of the park's Chance C.P. Huntington train on-site (above). Eric Anderson (right), park president, said one of the biggest challenges they have during the winter is the age of the park, which is 113 years. Much of the plumbing is just right under the ground. With Connecticut's cold winters, those plumbing lines have to be completely drained. COURTESY QUASSY



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►WINTER

Continued from page 43

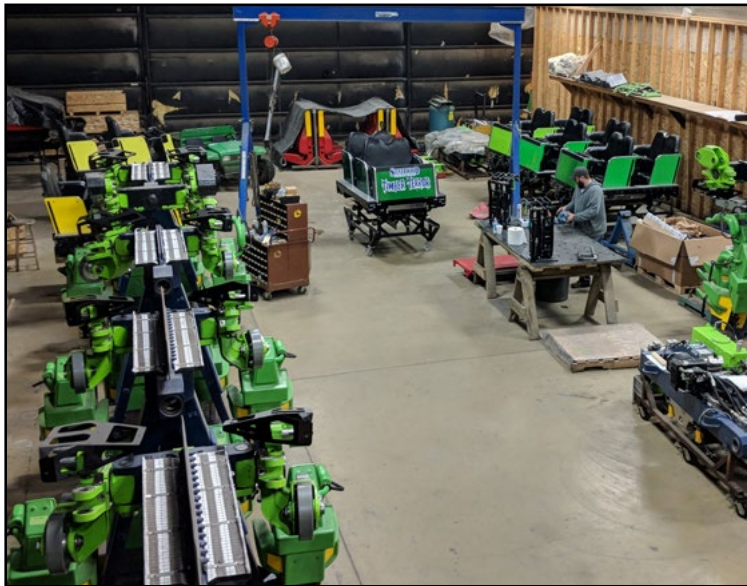
Because of the cold temperatures in New Jersey, Moore said the pipes in the outdoor portion of **Sahara Sam's Water Oasis**, West Berlin, New Jersey, another Boomer's property, are treated a little differently. Just draining the pipes won't do. They are drained, blown out with air, air locked and filled with anti-freeze.

"And just because Big Kahuna's is in Florida, doesn't mean we don't have to worry about freezing pipes," Moore said. "It can get down into the high 30s in the Florida Panhandle."

Because of the salty ocean air, all electrical components have to be stored in a climate controlled area.

Part of the off-season maintenance program also includes draining and maintaining Big Kahuna's miniature golf course with its ponds, water falls and landscaping.

Winterization at **Walde-meer Park and Water World**, Erie, Pennsylvania, was a little different this year than last, according to owner



All rides at Silverwood Theme Park, Athol, Idaho, are completely stripped down at the close of the season. There is a workshop for the roller coasters (above) and a workshop for the flat rides. Part of the winterization process is replacing some of the sections of the park's wooden coasters (right). This is done even in the snow. COURTESY SILVERWOOD

Paul Nelson.

All rides were dismantled as always and whatever needed to be done was done.

"We strip our rides all the way down," Nelson said.

But, due to COVID-19 shutting down his park for part of the season, he did have to lay off some of his maintenance crew at the end of the season, sooner than their sea-

son would end.

"We had people normally that work in the office out in the park painting," Nelson said.

Nelson said he was able to complete a new slide project and install two new dry rides in 2020.

"So, we are looking better than we have looked in a long time because we had the time to do it," he said.



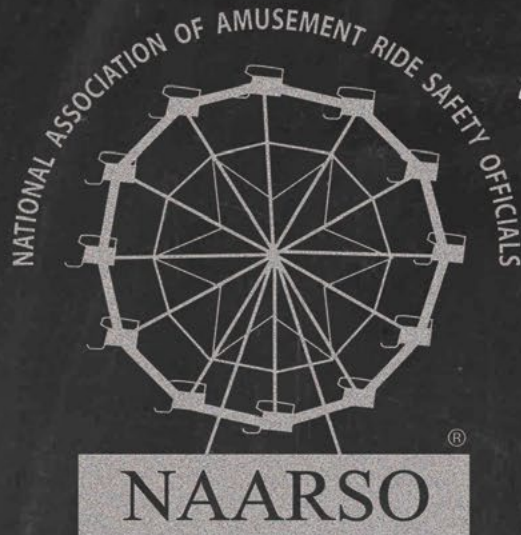
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Industry suppliers begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel

Many are hopeful that relief has not come too late

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The year 2020 has come and gone, but the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt by the amusement industry. It is that snowball analogy that seems to fit as parks and attractions shutdown, travel restrictions were set and health mandates were put into place.

For many amusement industry suppliers, business slowed to a crawl.

That is the case for **Lars Koch, EWorks Pro**.

"I sell lighting systems for amusement rides," Koch said. "If no one is making rides, no one needs lighting."

Koch is hopeful, however, but he still feels it will take years for business to come back like it was.

"I think we will start seeing some movement in six to nine months," he said. "We would like to get back to business now. But it is not looking very pretty."

"We used to have ride manufacturers that would come by and show us a drawing about what they were thinking about and we could give them ideas about lighting. That is just gone."

Koch had to lay off some of his workers and was down to a core staff in December. He said he was doing enough business in parts to keep some employees.

Jessy Coffeen, chief ex-



Eworks Pro did the lighting on this unicoaster at Galaxyland, West Edmonton Mall, Edmonton, Alberta.
COURTESY EWORKS PRO

ecutive officer, **Uremet**, said they have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When parks began closing down and/or were limited in capacity, we saw the demands for wheels shrink greatly," Coffeen stated.

Coffeen explained that the company was running with a 32-hour work week and had planned to shut down during the holidays for the first time in Uremet's history.

"This was once our busiest season," Coffeen said, in mid-December. "Operating in California also has come with many limitations as we are currently in the midst of another stay-at-home order."

"We are hopeful that 2021 offers us a glimmer of hope

for getting the business back on track," she said.

Maclan Corp.'s Maegan Wallace, amusement sales, marketing, said her company, too, is hopeful and ready to get back to business.

Maclan made the decision earlier in the year to build a new production facility and broke ground just before the virus broke out. Construction has been slower than originally anticipated, but she said they are excited for the progress made.

"As far as personal safety, we have been one of the lucky ones to remain open throughout the pandemic," Wallace said. "We have adhered to many of the mitigation suggestions such as temperature checks, social distancing, hand sanitizing and hand washing to ensure our employees a safe environment."

"We also have been contacted regarding several new projects and have continued to work with parks in the U.S. as well as internationally as they work to keep their rides running and wheels turning," she said.

Some industry suppliers have been able to pivot some-

what and offer products that go along with the times.

Waterloo Tent and Tarp has been producing and distributing a line of WTT MED tents for drive-throughs and walk-ups so folks can receive various tests and receive vaccinations.

"The commercial units we produce are multifunctional and scalable as we have designed them around our California Line-Up concept," said Waterloo's **Pete Downs**.

In addition, Downs said they are testing a new vinyl product with a slow release anti-microbial element.

"Anti-microbials are approved by the FDA for killing a variety of viruses including Covid-related viruses," he said. "This fabric, when approved, will be manufactured in all the bright, captivating colors the industry knows us for."

Downs said earlier in the year when the pandemic was just hitting and his employees were beginning to feel nervous, they decided to shut down their plant for two weeks. That two weeks became eight.

"We sanitized, cleaned, installed plexiglass where necessary, to maintain a safe environment," Downs said. "We implemented our own C.D.C. Guidelines....Cover, Distance, Clean. Cover your face, keep appropriate distance, Clean

your hands frequently and sanitize your workspace at the end of your shift."

To help with the hand sanitizing, Downs said they purchased the foot-pedal powered, no-touch hand sanitizing stations made by **Bob's Space Racers**.

"They are amazing units," he said.

Waterloo named the stations they purchased Whac-A-Germs after Bob's Space Racers' popular game Whac-A-Mole.

Bob's Space Racers began production of its new high-volume, foot pedal hand-sanitizers in early May as locations were slowly beginning to open. The company produces three models, from a stainless steel base model to a standard version with graphics to a custom version with specific logos, colors and more.

Downs is proud of the steps they have taken to protect each other at Waterloo.

"Our prep and maintenance plan is working as Waterloo Tent has become a safe zone, while the pandemic cases continue to rise around us," Downs said.

Going through what Downs defines as the "Trade Show Turkey Sandwich" without the trade shows has been very different. He was

► See SUPPLIERS, page 48



Maegan Wallace, second from left, Maclan Corp., poses at IAAPA Expo 2019 in Orlando with other Maclan representatives.
COURTESY MACLAN CORP.

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At left are two examples of Waterloo Tent and Tarp's shade tents, Two Post Hip Structure (far left) and Shade Creations Sail Cabanas. COURTESY WATERLOO TENT AND TARP

► **SUPPLIERS**
Continued from page 46

referring to the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions** annual expo in November and the **International Association of Fairs and Expositions** convention in December with Thanksgiving in the middle.

He feels like he missed the annual two opportunities to say thanks to his industry friends and associates.

"But, a good friend in the industry once told me, 'Sometimes the best foot forward is to take a step back,'" Downs said. "Frankly, some good advice. This pandemic has challenged everyone to take a step back, assess the situation, and plan your recourse."

There have been other suppliers that found a way to stay relevant such as ride manufacturers **Chance Rides** and **Zamperla Rides**. The two manufacturers made changes to specific rides by adding plexiglass dividers to keep riders safe.

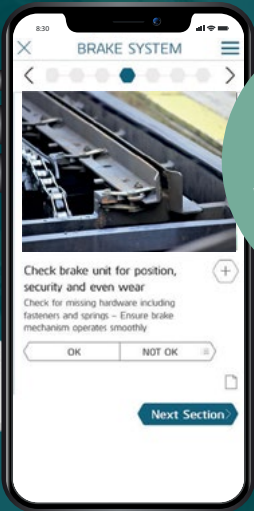
In June, Zamperla Rides launched a new wash-through ride system to help disinfect attractions to keep guests safe. The system, which is a tunnel or suspended structure that arches over the ride track, uses a sanitizing mist to disinfect the ride vehicle. The mist used is colorless, odorless and is a non-alcohol base.

In October, **TraKid**, a company that makes GPS wristbands to alleviate the problem of lost children at attractions, announced it had partnered with 20 U.S. amusement parks, water parks, and zoos to provide those attractions with a combined \$20M in funds in 2021.

TraKid plans to provide \$60,000 to \$200,000 to each partner park in the form of an in-park sponsorship. In addition, it will pay each park between \$500,000 and \$2 million from revenue derived from rentals promoted within the park. The complete TraKid solution comes at no cost to the parks and is regularly inspected and updated throughout the year by the TraKid Customer Success Team.



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Renkus-Heinz creates Kalahari soundscape

FOOTHILL RANCH, Calif. — **Kalahari Resorts & Conventions** is known for its impressive waterparks, family-friendly vacations, and comprehensive meeting and events facilities. Kalahari is also known for effectively tying all these uses together through a unified experience. This is done with curation of custom artwork from African artisans, music sourced from across Africa, and top-of-the-line technology and entertainment.

"Every Kalahari location is unique," said **Rebecca Fuchs**, senior design consultant with **Conference Technologies Inc.** "Kalahari has made it a point to create an authentic and impressive experience at every location within a resort. That includes everything from the art and souvenirs, to the water temperature, to the AV they use."

Conference Technologies Inc. recently completed a full integration of the newest Kalahari resort in Round Rock, Texas. And for many locations on the premises — including the 223,000 square foot indoor waterpark — the firm relied on **Renkus-Heinz** to provide impressive and intelligible sound.

"Inside the waterpark you have high ceilings, high volumes of people in the space, and you're trying to cover an extremely large area," Fuchs said. "The ask here is that you have music and sound that is not just fun but creates an element of emotion and excitement. You need to connect with it. And to do that, you need it to be intelligible. It can't just be really loud sound coming out of the speaker. It has to be strategic. So, we turned to Renkus-Heinz."



The heavily-themed Kalahari indoor water park in San Antonio, Texas, features intelligible immersive sound provided by Renkus-Heinz. AT/TIM BALDWIN

The water park leverages multiple Renkus-Heinz loudspeakers within the space — many of which make use of the company's impressive digitally steerable solutions. Digitally steerable beams allow for sound to be positioned precisely where you want it most: on the audience. This is a critical consideration for large locations such as a water park, where traditional loudspeakers are apt to bounce sound off reverberant surfaces and result in decreased audio quality.

•renkus-heinz.com



AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

Midwest safety conference postponed by Ohio Showmen

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Out of an abundance of caution, amid the continued COVID-19 pandemic, the **Greater Ohio Showmen's Association (GOSA)** has decided to postpone the 2021 Midwest Safety & Operations Conference which was scheduled to take place March 1 – 3, 2021.

David Drake, president of the GOSA, stated, "The current **State of Ohio Department of Health** rules limit meetings to no more than 10 people. While vaccines are on the horizon, it is difficult to predict if the conference will be able to operate safely and at full capacity. In fairness to all participants and sponsors, postponement to

2022 is the best option."

The inaugural **GOSA Safety & Operations Conference** provided multiple tracks of **NAARSO** ride inspection training and over a dozen workshops for concessionaires, games and midway personnel. Operations workshops covered topics from electrical upgrades for concession trailers to fall arrest and ladder safety training.

"We look forward to seeing everyone at the 2nd annual conference which will take place February 28 to March 2, 2022 at **Kalahari Resort**, Sandusky, Ohio," noted **Eric German**, conference organizer.

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Appetize surveys customer trends during pandemic

LOS ANGELES — Due to COVID-19, contactless payment technology is rising in demand — both for consumers and businesses alike — faster than expected. In fact, more CEOs of major companies are noting its significant growth, like Apple CEO **Tim Cook**.

"This contactless payment has taken on a different level of adoption. And that I think we'll never go back," Cook said during Apple's 4th quarter earnings call on October 30.

In *Business Insider's* recent Mobile Order-Ahead and Delivery Payments & Commerce report, the pandemic pushed digital technology for pickup, delivery, and in-person dining in restaurants, "bringing penetration to levels not expected until 2023."

From restaurants to retail, contactless payments, mobile ordering and digital technology are becoming "the new normal" for businesses now and into the future.

Appetize and **SurveyMonkey** polled 2,081 adults between 18 and 70 years old in the U.S. for the Contactless Technology Survey during mid-October. The survey was conducted online.

Americans use their phones every day, but many go beyond the typical phone calls, texts and web browsing.

According to the survey, over 74% of Americans use their phone to order and pay for food and merchandise at least once a week, with nearly 48% using their phones for purchases several times a week or more.

The top reason Americans use mobile ordering was sheer convenience. In fact, 44% of Americans said convenience was the most important factor for ordering and paying for food and merchandise with their phone. Ease of use (18.6%) and avoiding going into stores (18.3%) were also top reasons.

The survey revealed that almost 72% of Americans prefer self-service kiosks at quick service restaurants over interacting with a person. 57% said they would like to see more self-service kiosks at their favorite restaurants. 45% said that they would prefer to use their phone when dining at a restaurant rather than interact with wait-staff during COVID-19. In addition, 40% said that they would still prefer to use their phone rather than interact with wait-staff after the pandemic passes.

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Action Park tells unbelievable tale of infamous New Jersey Park

REVIEW: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Talk to anyone in the amusement industry, and they will be quick to spout out the motto, "Safety is the No. 1 priority at our park." Except one. Action Park, which operated from 1978 to 1996, had a different philosophy: "You Control the Action."

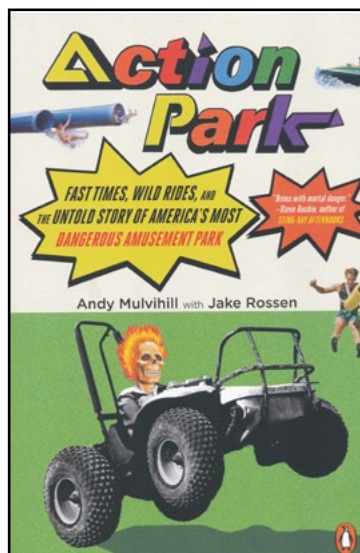
Gene Mulvihill, a fast-acting salesman and stock market broker, acquired a ski resort in New Jersey following a failed investment attempt by others. Eventually becoming disenchanted that this acquisition could only operate less than 100 days a year — if Mother Nature cooperated, that is — he looked to transform it into a year-round moneymaker. Mulvihill used his large family, which included six children, to make it possible. One of his sons, Andy, is the author of *Action Park*, and vividly details the outlandish steps his father took to make sure his amusement park would be unlike anything else.

Theme parks were populating the U.S. in the 1970s. Andy's father set out to put the control in

the guests' hands. That was the marketing niche, and, as it turned out, crowds embraced it, regardless of the danger.

Mulvihill tells the unbelievable behind-the-scenes stories like only a family member can. "He believed every person was an architect of their own fate," Mulvihill states of his father. And so came a list of attractions that regularly maimed, wounded and ... well, worse. Like witnessing a car wreck, it's too gruesome for the reader to look but impossible to turn away. It's like a primer on how NOT to run a park in today's world. Reading *Action Park* is like watching an amusement park succumb to the dark side. And it is that mesmerizing disbelief that hypnotizes the reader into being drawn in.

Some of the Action Park attractions might sound commonplace to resorts and parks around the country — alpine slides, waterslides, go karts, etc. Action Park had a way of amping up the risk. Alpine slides were ridden by participants in skimpy swimsuits, one of whom whose



The expansive Action Park marketed itself by boasting that the guests control the action.

COURTESY ACTION PARK

"detached rear became legend." Speed boats on a lake, topped with a layer of leaked gasoline and motor fluids, would find capsized riders screaming about their burning skin. On the first weekend that all 10 dune buggies were available, they "all met cruel



ends." Inebriated guests insanely drove race cars over tire edgings and through fences. A homemade tank attraction fired tennis balls

at 100 mph, often directly at the ride attendants. When one worker had a projectile fired directly into his testicle, he folded over. "Wimbledon meets Vietnam," Mulvihill states it. Mulvihill's father was gleeful with the wild possibilities of giving guests total control with no rules. And then there is, of course, the notorious looping waterslide that took front teeth out of test riders. It's all unbelievable, but true.

The writing is sensational. Mulvihill (along with *Mental Floss* staff writer Jake Rossen) expertly crafts the true stories that will literally make any reader laugh out loud. And gasp. Much of this is owed to the firsthand accounts of a family member. Mulvihill, trapped in a surreal existence of his adolescence being framed by a prideful adoration of his father's creative ingenuity while at the same time working — and growing up — in an insane environment, brings a personal authenticity to the tale.

When the park is finally wrested from his father's control, one almost breathes a sigh of relief. At the same time, there is the realization that the outlandish property like no other will never see its creative equal. It's an odd sense of loss.

Through the twists and turns of the boundary-pushing attractions, politics and insurance shenanigans lies a family's story. The unassuming book cover hardly conveys the gripping details of an infamous park destined to be a one-of-a-kind destination within the amusement industry. *Action Park* is an amazing read.

•actionparkbook.com

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BREAKING NEWS

AEI leadership announces date change for 2021 event in Las Vegas



The Amusement Expo International plans to return to Las Vegas in 2021 with its popular show floor and education sessions. The dates for the event have been pushed back to June 28-30, 2021. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

MOKENA, Ill. — After continuing to monitor the rapidly-changing COVID climate, including current and projected COVID measures in the Las Vegas trade show market, the leadership of Amusement Expo International (AEI) have decided to move back the dates of the forthcoming industry event by eight weeks. The new dates are Monday, June 28 through Wednesday, June 30, 2021.

The 2021 AEI will be conducted in the same city as originally planned: Las Vegas, Nevada, but the two-day exhibit program will now take place in North Hall 1 of the expansive Las Vegas

Convention Center, a preferred spot that is adjacent to the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino, which will remain the headquarters hotel for the 2021 AEI.

Both the full-day educational program on Monday, June 28 and All-Industry Gala Reception that evening will be conducted at the Westgate Las Vegas.

The rationale for the rescheduling of AEI is that it provides additional time for attendees, exhibitors and all involved in AEI to recover and resume business operations. Also, it is expected that the much-anticipated COVID-19 vaccinations will be widely

distributed and available by that time. The goal is to give the industry the best possible opportunity to come together and the decision to move the 2021 dates to summer will significantly help AEI achieve that goal.

AEI show management team, W.T. Glasgow, Inc., joined co-sponsoring organizations, the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) and AMOA, in thanking attendees and exhibitors for their continued support during the past nine months and look forward to putting on the much-anticipated event in June.

•amusementexpo.org

Indoor snowfall experience courtesy of Austria's Swarovski Crystal Worlds



BOLZANO, Italy — TechnoAlpin partnered with Swarovski to create a wholly unique indoor snowfall experience for visitors to Austria's Swarovski Crystal Worlds museum, which is one of Austria's biggest tourist attractions. The installation, which can be experienced in the Chamber of Wonder, represents the first dynamic snowfall ever created behind closed doors. This installation was the company's first simulation of natural snowfall. COURTESY TECHNOALPIN INDOOR



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